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MAGAZINE

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Air assault insertions look like a snap from 1,500 feet. Guess what? They aren't. But there are *beaucoup* volunteers if they're going after American POWs.

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AP Photo/Ben Margol, Popo

**On the Cover**  
Aviation Machinist's Mate Senior Chief Nicholas Mellos of Ypsilanti, Mich., a crew member from the American spy plane, waves an American flag upon disembarking a C-17 plane from Guam, Thursday, April 12, 2001, at Hickam Field in Honolulu. Story on page 60.



courtesy Nelson Rand

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courtesy Carson Nightwine Jr.

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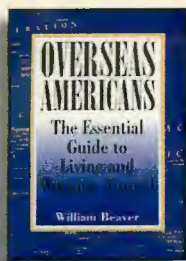
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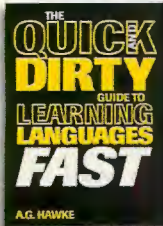
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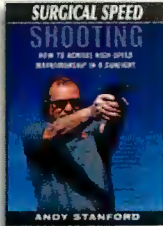
## The Essential Guide to Living and Working Abroad by William Beaver

**Overseas Americans** is the essential handbook for U.S. citizens living or working abroad. It contains vital information and actual documents from all the government agencies that you as an expatriate will have to deal with, including the IRS, State Department, Customs, and Social Security Administration. Find answers to all your questions about living or working abroad before you go: must I pay U.S. taxes? What travel documents, visas or work permits will I need? Is my destination safe for Americans? What should I do if I'm arrested in a foreign country? Can I lose my U.S. citizenship by living overseas? Will my health insurance be good? Can I vote in U.S. elections while living abroad? In addition to answering these and other frequently asked questions, this invaluable guide provides an annotated list of the 100 most helpful Web sites for Americans abroad, as well as the password to a special Web site just for readers of **Overseas Americans**. Don't leave home without this book! 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, 168 pp. **#10014207 \$25.00**



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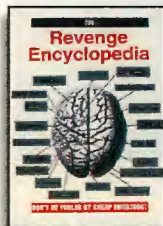
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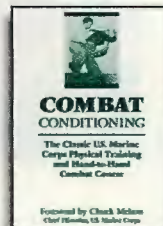
### WEAPON TESTS AND EVALUATIONS The Best of Soldier Of Fortune by Peter G. Kokalis

In this comprehensive anthology of Kokalis' best articles from *SOF* and *Fighting Firearms* magazines, you'll get reviews and detailed specifications on dozens of handguns, rifles, SMGs, sniper rifles and shotguns from the man who for 20 years has brought his readers more exclusives than any other writer on small arms. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, photos, 408 pp. **#10012540 \$45.00**



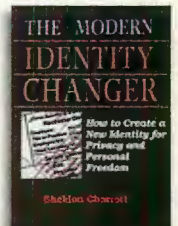
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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## SOF's Apology to China

We apologize to the People's Republic of China for allowing our reconnaissance plane to be hit by your poorly trained, hot-dogging fighter pilot while our plane was flying in international airspace.

Also, we're extremely sorry we have to conduct surveillance missions to monitor your country simply because you have nuclear missiles pointed at The United States of America.

You could up your protocol standards by instructing your pilots in methods of international fighter intercept. Despite your pilot's shortcomings, we regret that he didn't realize that our EP-3E aircraft was prop-driven and flew his plane through our propeller arc, which downed his F-8 and nearly killed 24 American crewmen and women. We apologize for our unarmed plane chewing up your state-of-the-art F-8 supersonic aircraft, particularly when our aircraft was set on auto-pilot and traveling on a straight heading. (Look, Wei, no hands!)

We're tremendously sorry that Wang Wei's survival training and equipment was so inadequate that he couldn't survive until your poorly trained and equipped navy could locate him and doubly sorry that you turned down the American offer for search and rescue assistance.

We're saddened that you violated international law and arrested the

crew of an aircraft that legally diverted to your Hainan airfield under emergency conditions caused by your pilot's actions.

We're sorry you violated international law and boarded a state aircraft. And we sincerely regret your international loss of face since the entire planet now sees you for the enemy of freedom, truth and justice that you truly are. Your Tiananmen Square mindset remains.

We are sorry that you consider yourself a world superpower when you in actuality a Third World nation in which your average worker earns less than ten cents a day.

We're sorry that you were able to steal nuclear secrets from us and that Bill Clinton couldn't seek a third term (a minor constraint called the U.S. Constitution, you know). But we heartily thank you for the soft money your nation contributed to his two election campaigns.

We solemnly regret that you haven't grasped the lesson of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the commercial success of tiny Taiwan that rogue nations are hardly the wave of the future.

But, most of all, we're sorry for the Chinese people who suffer through their leaders' incompetence and brutality.

Now, can we have our airplane back? ☒



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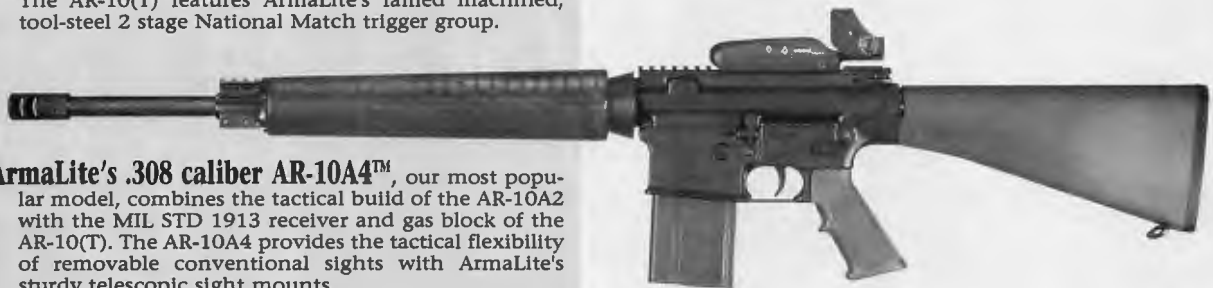
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## Border Patrol In .40 S&W



I would like to thank you for the recent articles you have published in *SOF* regarding the United States Border Patrol. The USBP has long been considered the

bastard child of federal law enforcement agencies just because the service does not require a degree to join. These articles prove the Border Patrol is the most 10-8 organization the federal system has going. One thing, however, in both the May and June articles about the BP, the authors state that BP Agents carry Beretta Model 92D, when in fact we carry the Beretta Model 96D. I am not exactly sure, but I think the 92D is a 9mm version of the same gun we carry in .40 S&W. I am only telling you this because your great magazine tends to strive for perfection in its attention to detail. Once again, thank you for the articles and keep up the great work.

James J. Searl, USBP  
Del Rio, Texas

## Kudos For Anti-Poachers



Kudos to *SOF* for bringing to the attention of the readers the matter that benefits everyone, the anti-poaching patrols. The individuals in these organizations that dedicate their effort to preserve Africa's wildlife deserve thanks from us all.

Not only the Zambia patrols, kudos to the patrols in the Congo that protect the gorillas and other primates. These dedicated and brave individuals have slowed the eradication of the beloved gorillas, including the mountain gorillas in Rawanda.

Thanks, *SOF*, for bringing this impor-

tant issue to the readers' attention. Soon the wildlife, elephants, rhinos, lions etc. and the primates will be wiped out if the anti-poaching patrols cease.

Ron Nicoll  
Glendale, California

## Convention 2001?

Several of us old *SOF* conventioners heard that there won't be another expo this year. We hope you do, but if you aren't planning one, thanks for a great ride: You gave us something to look forward to.

Gene K. Oda  
Via e-mail

*The SOF "Convention" lives — but with a new name and a fresh new venue. It is now the "SOF/Whittington Center World Championship Three Gun Tactical Response Benefit Match, Shoot Fest and Gun Show." See page 29 of this issue for more details, and we'll see you there!*

## New E-Mail for SA SF Connection



The e-mail address supplied [for League of former South African Special Forces] ends May 1st. The new e-mail address is: [smbond@freemail.absa.co.za](mailto:smbond@freemail.absa.co.za). There is also a website in its infancy: [http://mil.za/CSANDF/CJOps/SpecialForcesBrigades/sa\\_special\\_forces\\_brigade.htm](http://mil.za/CSANDF/CJOps/SpecialForcesBrigades/sa_special_forces_brigade.htm).

As far as membership goes, they do have members from other units, both military and police, and I think I am the only member who is ex-RLI in the Johannesburg branch of the league.

Please allow me to congratulate you on a first class military magazine — a truly professional publication. When I was still in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

I was lucky enough to obtain two of your earlier mags, Vol. 1 and Vol. 3. Keep up the good work and I hope you go from strength to strength.

Jon Wrathall, (Sgt. Rhodesian and Zimbabwean Army, retired)

## Bully! Bagwell's Back

I want to commend the reappearance of Bill Bagwell as a writer for your magazine. In my line of business, I avoid violence and dangerous situations like the plague, after all it is better for profits, and no sane individual wants to get hurt. Nevertheless, if called upon to put a knife into use, I will use the Bagwell technique and method.

I also appreciate the fact that he includes information in his column about sources to purchase the large bowies, and sources for training. Thank you again for promoting writers of this quality and depth of experience.

WJ. Crowe  
Certified Protection Officer, Private Detective Agency 1736 GA, Georgia Bar No. 198520

## No, No, No!

I am writing to you requesting information on acquiring a license to own full-automatic firearms. I assume such licensing varies from state to state. I live in Minnesota. How much does such a license cost, and how does one go about applying for one? I have had little success in finding this information, and will greatly appreciate your assistance. It is my understanding that ownership of sub machineguns for sporting and self-defense purposes was not unusual prior to the 1930s, and that it was around that time period that possession of such armaments was forbidden to private citizens.

I am a sergeant in the USMC reserve, with four years active duty

experience as well. I am a veteran of that "politically correct" operation in Somalia, and I have experience as an infantry rifleman and am currently a military policeman. Since I am clearly a law-abiding patriotic citizen, do you foresee any obstacles that I might encounter in attaining the proper license to own a sub machinegun?

Recently I purchased a kit of parts for a Finnish Soumi sub machinegun. I'm sure you've seen these kits that are available at many gun shows and firearms distributors. Unfortunately, they always destroy the receivers to meet BATF requirements. Do you know of any source that would provide an intact receiver for the Soumi, or at least a template for machining one?

Sgt. Fred Smith  
Minnesota

Whoa, whoa, as you were, as you were! First, regarding your state and local regulations or licensing requirements: Contact your state attorney general's office to find out what the rules are in your state, and then check with your local city/county officials and find out if there are further local restrictions that apply. You might get some help through your JAG office, also.

There probably are plans, drawings, or specs available somewhere on how to cobble up a receiver for most any sub gun, as they are the simplest of arms. BUT there is no legal way to do this. The parts kits are legally sold only as replacement parts for existing, registered, legal automatic weapons. Since 1934, automatic weapons must be registered with the Treasury Department, and a \$200 transfer tax paid every time that gun changes hands, and all transfers must be approved in advance by the BATF. HOWEVER, since 1986 new manufacture for civilian sale, or importation for civilian sale, has been prohibited. This means the only legal automatic weapons in private hands are the ones that are already on paper. You CANNOT make up an automatic weapon from parts and take it in and pay the \$200 tax and register it.

Thus, if you want a Soumi, you'll have to go to an individual or licensed dealer who has a legal one, and buy it from him. Since existing legal automatic weapons are a finite resource, prices have risen sharply since 1986 — but at least you already have spare parts for your legal gun when you find one.

Good luck, Gunny, but for gosh sakes do this according to the book!

## George Bacon, Hero

George Bacon was a genuine hero, motivated by his anti-communist ideals. However, Chip Beck's account of his death is inaccurate. I refer readers to *Fire Power* by Chris Dempster and Dave Tompkins. Bacon was one of seven mercenaries in a truck which ran into an MPLA truck; unfortunately, they opened fire first. Bacon was shot to death as were all but one of his comrades, Gary Acker, who was captured. The 13 captured mercs were captured at various times, not all together. Four, not two, of them were shot after the prearranged show trial.

I write with some knowledge — the Angolan war of 1976 was a major factor in my political development. It both confirmed my anti-communist beliefs and indirectly introduced me to *Soldier Of Fortune*.

Mark Taylor,  
Sydenham, UK

Chip Beck responds:

As an intelligence officer, I know that field reports, especially those that do not come via official or refined channels, can be inaccurate, so Mr. Taylor may have a point. The event as I described it was as

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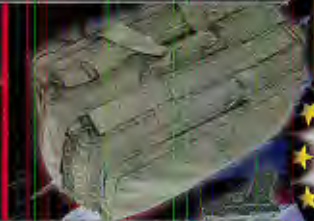
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it was relayed to me not long after the incident transpired. I am aware that Gary Acker survived, but the reports we received at the time did not indicate all the other mercenaries in the truck were engaged in the fire fight or killed. Nor did the Cuban archive reports apparently indicate that this was the case. The reports at the time indicated that it was a Cuban patrol, not an MPLA truck, that the mercenaries in the Land Rover encountered, and the Cuban officials have not disputed that element, and in fact generally confirmed it. Not knowing as of this writing Dempster or Tompkins' sources, I can only say that I'll copy down Mr. Taylor's letter and inquire when I get to Cuba (tomorrow, as of this writing). Thanks for the input. Always welcome.

## Find That Finn

I am from Finland and I have an unusual problem. I am trying to find a guy who lives in Finland, and fought in Bosnia 95/98 named Kasagrande (he wrote a book about his experiences, under the name Luca Moconesi). Do you know the best way to search for him, because I want to write him, and tell him how inspired I was by his book.

Jan H.  
Via e-mail

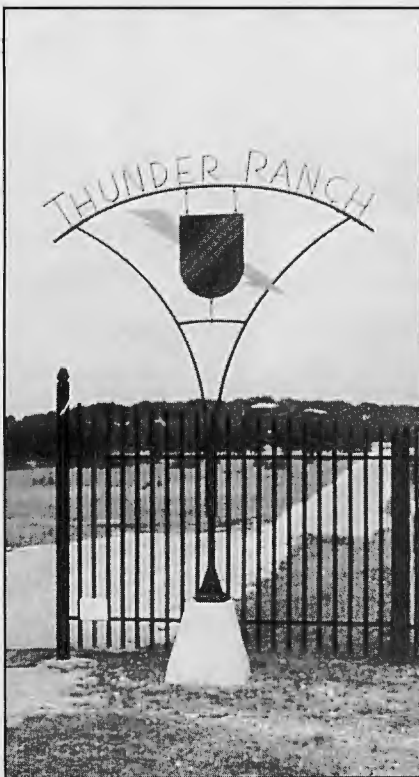
If you have his book, why not write to him in care of the publisher? Otherwise, since you are both from Finland he should be easy to locate, and I'd try to do it via the Internet. I'll bet your local library can give you some pointers on locating someone in Finland. Unless they are hiding, regular people are very easy to locate.

## Shooting Schools à la SEALs

In past issues you featured articles concerning tactical shooting schools instructed by ex-Navy SEALs. Unfortunately I no longer have these articles. I am interested in enrolling in these particular schools and would greatly appreciate any information (school names/websites) you may have.

Santiago Rodriguez  
Via e-mail

You are probably thinking of GSGI, run by former SEAL Harry Humphries, on whom we have done articles, and whom we can recommend. Their phone is: 310-637-7166. ✕



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# GET YOUR GEAR

by Tom Chambers

## Sovietski Collection Binoculars

When I was in the Army, one of the best pieces of advice I received was from my platoon sergeant: "Before you go anywhere, do anything, always get and check your gear." It's like before you go on a long trip with the family. You'll want to check your vehicle's tire pressure, engine oil level, coolant level, and maybe even the accessory drive belts and the automatic transmission fluid level. In the case of the military I made sure my weapon was clean and lubricated, replaced the compression bandage I had taken out of my first-aid kit the last time I was in the field, checked to make sure that my ammo clips were ready for action, and made sure I had the proper equipment in my pack that I would need for the upcoming mission.

This lesson was learned the hard way, like the time I forgot my P-38 (can opener) and used a dull knife to open up a can of fruit cocktail, but all I opened up was my hand. Or the time I knew my boot heel was loose, but did nothing about it so I walked nine miles on cobblestone streets without one and had the mother of all blisters. These, and a few other incidents convinced me that I had better know how to care for my gear and how to properly maintain and use it.

That's basically what this column is about. I'm going to present some basics about how to select the outdoor gear you might need and how to properly maintain and use it, and might even give a specific recommendation on a product that I've successfully used in the past.

This month let's talk about binoculars. You know, those glasses that allow us to see beyond our normal vision range, increasing our visual acuity by passing through lenses that magnify the image we are looking at. If you are a hunter of any kind, binoculars can help you locate that elusive game. Most game can see much better than us, some up to seven times more. Binoculars help even up those odds. I personally use them for fishing; looking for birds diving on bait and to help me recognize landmarks from greater distances. I could probably write a book on all the uses of binoculars.

Basically there are two styles of binoculars: porro-prism (you golfers can appreciate this) with their dogleg design and roof-prism with their straight-tube design. Many of the high-end "glasses" feature the roof-prism design that allow the assembly of a straight tube configuration and generally does produce better results. Roof-prism binoculars take a lot more time and effort to manufacture; that's why many of the high-end brands are more expensive.

*Continued on page 88*



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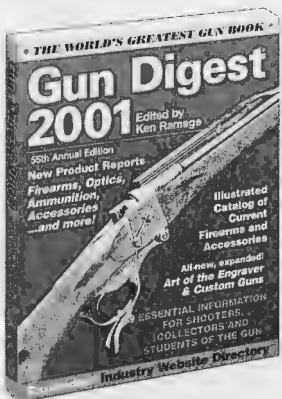
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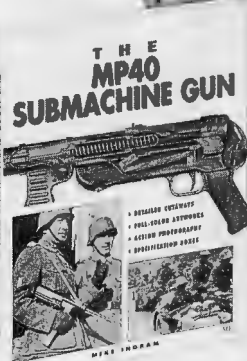


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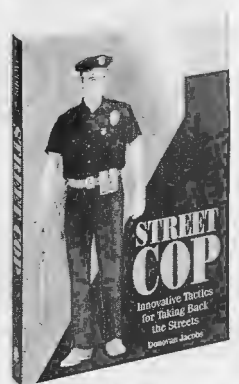
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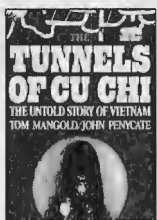
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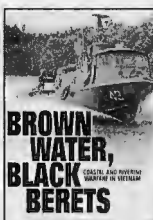
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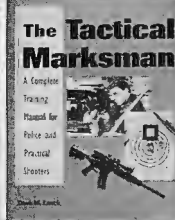
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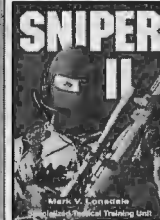
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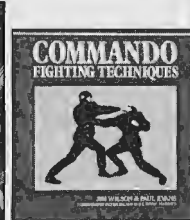
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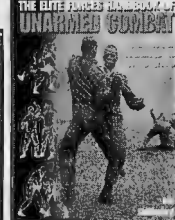
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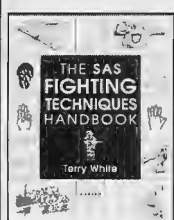
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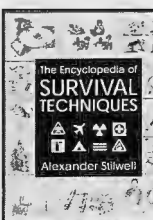
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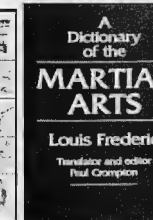
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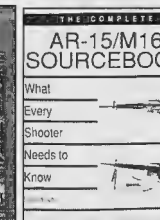
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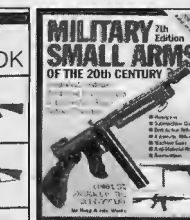
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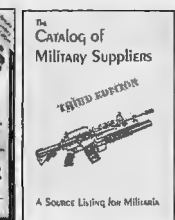
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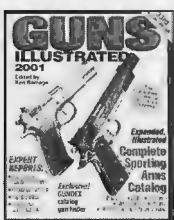
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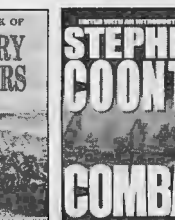
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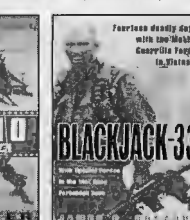
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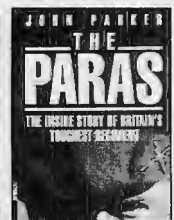
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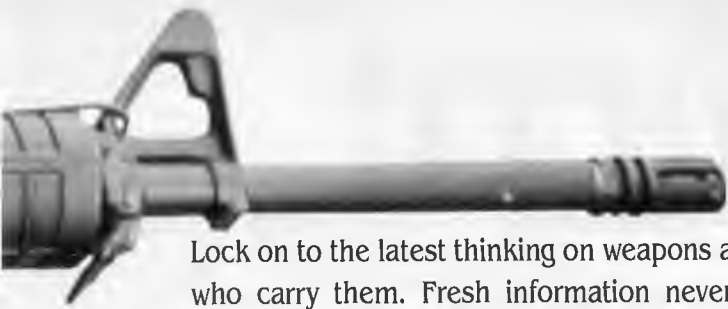
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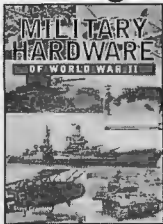
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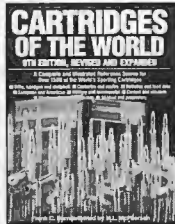
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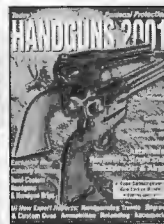
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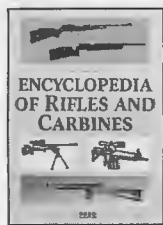


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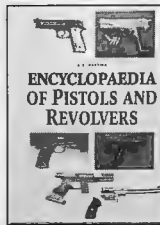
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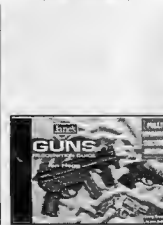
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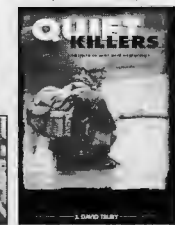
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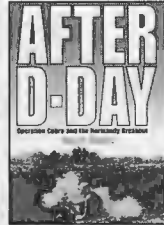
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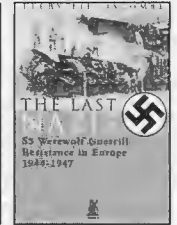
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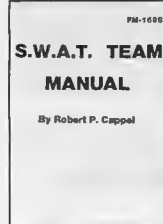
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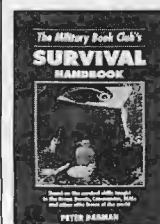
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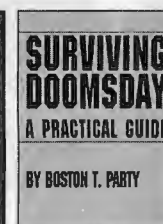
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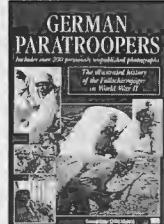
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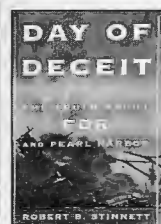
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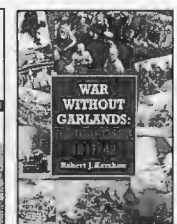
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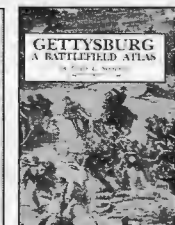
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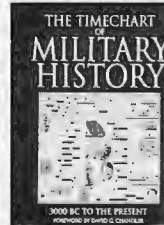
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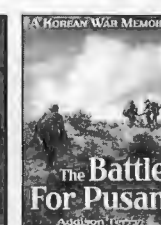
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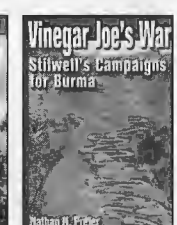
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# I Was There

by Horace "Woody" Woodring

## Driving The General

**A**n unannounced turn by a deuce-and-a-half truck right in front of a four-star general's limousine doing 35 mph ended the life, and career, of one of our most colorful and decorated generals, George S. Patton.

Oliver Stone could have turned Patton's last days into another Day Of The Jackal, for Stone's project would have been full of conspiracy, assassination plots and covert underworld intrigue. After all, it was General Patton who had rightly or wrongly created a whole host of bad-blood dealings with the Russians, the Germans and even the British Army's General Montgomery, all of whom held Patton in utter contempt. I, as the General's last driver, recall my final months with this late, great American.

My fate was sealed at the Battle of the Bulge, the Germans' last attempt to sever the Allies' lines. It was bitter cold and I was sent to a medical unit to recover from frostbite to my feet. While in recovery I interviewed for a position as driver to General George Patton. Prior to enlisting in the Army, I was an experienced racing driver and stunt pilot. I got the assignment.

My months with Patton still trigger a legion of Patton stories.

One time, I was chauffeuring the General to a staff meeting when we were startled by the sharp report of a single gunshot. I turned to see Patton with his new hunting rifle — which he had just fired to bring down a buck while traveling at over 80 mph! I recall helping the General lift the carcass over a fence and then load it into the trunk of his limousine. Patton was a remarkable marksman and the ivory-handled pistols he carried were not just for show.

On another occasion, when we were



photos: courtesy author



General George S. Patton. His triumphant return to the States was not to be. (left) Rare post-crash photo of Patton's limo.

speeding along the isolated *autobahn*, a German motorist in a Porsche convertible caused me to careen off the road, an incident which inflamed Patton.

"Woody," he snarled, "catch that son of a bitch!"

I remember forcing the Porsche over to the side of the highway with the General still barking orders.

"Woody, shoot the bastard!"

"Yes, Sir!" I snarled back, reaching for my .45. But Patton, by now sputtering in rage, stopped me.

"No, wait! I'll shoot the son of a bitch myself!"

But his calmer side prevailed, noting that the German national had only one arm, and he finally ordered the very fortunate civilian arrested for running an American military vehicle off the road. But following the arrest, about 10 miles down the highway, the General had me contact the MPs and order the man's release.

"Shit," he sardonically said, "it was prob'ly me who shot his arm off."

General Patton's demeanor and his

impressive Cadillac Limousine decorated with military stars drew the attention of civilians and military personnel. Even after the War's end, though, bitter resentment still seethed from old hard-line Germans.

German locals usually manned railroad crossings. Once, when the General and I approached a crossing, guards brought down the gate even though there was no train in sight. Patton, with all his "usual patience," leaped from the limo and screamed at the operator, "Open this gate or I'm going to put a round up your ass!" He didn't intend his aforementioned pistols to be merely showpieces.

My final day, 9 December 1945, of driving for General Patton dawned quite ordinarily. It was bitterly cold that morning in Mannheim, Germany, where Patton had risked his life in battle. He was in a good mood, no doubt anticipating his return to the States the following day.

A noon pheasant hunt was arranged between General "Hap" Gay, myself and a hunting advisor, Sergeant Spruce,

who would drive his jeep with his hunting dog and direct our small group to a prize location where game was said to be plentiful. En route, Patton decided to do a little sightseeing of a castle and after a short tour we climbed into the front seat of the limo where he proceeded to dry off his wet boots.

At a checkpoint a couple of miles from the hunting area Patton looked over his shoulder and noticed Sgt. Spruce's dog in the trailing jeep.

"Woody, go and bring that dog inside the car. He looks cold."

As I fetched the dog Patton got out of the front seat and climbed into the rear with General Gay; the dog was now up front with me. That simple act of kindness toward an animal ended the life of a national hero.

We motored on for a short distance when the accident occurred. The deuce-and-a-half turned into a partially obscured Quartermaster area. I was going no faster than 35 mph, the 2 1/2-ton truck was doing no more than 10 mph. But the impact was so great it thrust Patton up and forward causing his head to hit the overhead light. It took some 55 stitches to close the injury.

But more critically, he sustained a broken neck and was paralyzed. He asked General Gay to rub his hands and fingers. Patton knew, I think, that his time to had come to leave this world.

The diagnosis: "Fracture simple, third cervical vertebrae," it read, "with posterior dislocation of fourth cervical. Complete paralysis below level of third cervical. Condition critical. Prognosis guarded." (Courtesy of *After The Battle*, "It Happened Here: The Death Of George S. Patton.")

His stay at the U.S. 130<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital, in Heidelberg, was pure torture since metal screws were placed on both sides of his head for traction. Mrs. Patton arrived from the United States on 11 December and he told her that they might not see each other again. But the General seemed to rally a bit during the last days. But at 1750 on 21 December an embolism struck his remaining functioning lung and he died of acute heart failure.

The General's favorite expression was "A pint o' sweat is worth a gallon of blood." He gave his blood and his sweat for his country with dedication above and beyond the call of duty.

Woody Woodring is available for speaking engagements. Contact John Hughes & Associates; phone: 248-647-8546; or by e-mail at [bjhj@mediaone.net](mailto:bjhj@mediaone.net).

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## MACV-SOG Awarded PUC

Due to their sensitive nature, some missions cannot be openly discussed — let alone lauded — until decades after the fact, and as a result some of the most dramatic, heroic events never make the news, and do not even make print until the history books are written. Such has largely been the case of the once-secret Military Assistance Command Vietnam — Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG).

MACV-SOG was a wide-ranging classified SpecOps program that trained indigenous peoples in guerrilla warfare and sent highly trained teams, sometimes consisting of as few as eight men, deep into enemy-controlled territory. MACV-SOG became legendary in special warfare circles, and the clandestine nature of the unit and its missions still feeds wild speculation about how it operated. In truth, this unit of highly dedicated professionals was willing — and capable of — extreme risks in their country's service, and much of what they did would sound like wild speculation were it not true. There was little or no recognition at the time as the operations were highly classified; Even well-deserved individual awards for valor were written with misleading information to avoid revealing where and how the action leading to the award took place.

Eighteen MACV-SOG teams are known to have either disappeared never to be heard from again, or were wiped out to a man. No team members were returned as POWs after hostilities ceased, and 25 G.I.s assigned to MACV-SOG remain listed as missing in action.

With recognition that has been three decades in coming, on 4 April 2001, the U.S. Army Special Forces units assigned to MACV-SOG were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, in a ceremony at Ft. Bragg hosted by Lieutenant General Doug Brown, Commander USASOC. The PUC is only awarded to units for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed



**SOF senior foreign correspondent Rob Krott recently returned from Karen National Liberation Army-controlled Burma. Ensuring that KNLA guerrillas will join the ranks of well-dressed freedom fighters, Rob presented SOF T-shirts to members of his KNLA escort team. Look for a story on his adventures with the KNLA in a future issue of Soldier Of Fortune.**

enemy. ARs state the unit as a whole must display the same degree of heroism that would warrant the award of the Distinguished Service Cross to an individual; the DSC is awarded for valor and heroism, second only to the Medal of Honor.

The award comes three years after CNN broadcast a bogus report saying SOG units used nerve gas on defectors (which it later had to retract). Noted former SOG Chief, Major General. Jack Singlaub, "I think that [the award] is long overdue, and I think that we have to give some thanks to CNN because the fiasco that they produced caused an investigation by the Department of Defense and others that found that we were not only not war criminals but, in fact, we had a collection of heroes that was not equaled."

SOG operatives worked deep behind enemy lines in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, conducting many operations on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and other selected targets in other areas, conducting sabotage, calling in B-52 strikes, and accomplishing daring rescues of downed pilots. General Brown noted that SOG had "the guile and audacity to take the war where the enemy lives, to get at his sanctuary, to make him react, to take away his safe and secure environment. ... It doesn't take many. It doesn't take often, but it takes men of steel, willing to take risks, willing to make the trip."

## Taiwanese Press On PRC Kamikaze

In wake of the downing of the our Navy Orion by the errant PRC flyer Wang Wei, staff writer Wun Wing Lo of the *Taiwan Daily Gazette* published the following story:

"In a heroic dogfight fought over international waters off the mainland China coast, a 1960s era American built Lockheed Electra (EP-3) propeller driven airliner with 24 U.S. military crew, passengers and observers aboard chewed up one of China's best state-of-the-art supersonic jet fighter aircraft.

The Americans, utilizing the infrequently seen combat tactic of straight and level flight accomplished relying solely on autopilot, engaged the unfortunate single seat combat jet fighter aircraft and knocked it out of the air using only one of the EP-3s four formidable rotating air mass propellers.

After the action the crew, and passengers and observers of the EP-3 dropped in on China's Hainan Island Resort for some much deserved R&R (Rest and Relaxation) as guests of the government of the People's Republic of China."

## Chambers Joins SOF As Ad Director

Tom Chambers has joined the staff of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine as Advertising Director. Chambers brings with him more than 30 years of sales and marketing experience and has represented magazines such as *American Survival Guide*, *Gun World* and *Knives Illustrated* as a sales and marketing representative.

Army-trained as a light weapons infantryman, Tom is a

graduate of the 6<sup>th</sup> Army NCO Academy, and held posts with the 6<sup>th</sup> Army at Ft. Ord, California, the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Ft. Lewis, Washington, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Berlin, Germany, as a member of the Army of Occupation.

For any of your advertising needs, please give him a call at his toll-free number: 888-811-8009; or e-mail to [tchambers19@home.com](mailto:tchambers19@home.com).

## Brisbane Discreetly Braces For CHOGM

A two-day national security exercise in Brisbane in June serves as the trial run for security considerations being taken for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings slated for next October 6. Representatives of some 52 Commonwealth countries are to meet at Brisbane's Convention and Exhibition Centre. Aussie security has previously dealt with the security for queens, popes, several American presidents and the recent Olympic Games — but the roster of Commonwealth leaders includes the likes of President Robert Mugabe, of Zimbabwe, considered by most to be a terrorist, and cranks into the security equation the potential for politically inspired violence. Indeed, a group called Campaign Against Racism in Zimbabwe (CARIZ) has declared Mugabe a wanted man, and called for a popular "snatch squad" to affect his arrest and release to an "International People's Court" for trial on seven varying counts of murder, election fraud and various other charges.

As a result, parts of central Brisbane will be closed to traffic, and a retreat scheduled for the Hyatt Coolum before the meetings is receiving special attention, as the resort borders on adjacent bushland. Bridges are also slated for close scrutiny.

## We're Not Making This Up

In light of the estimated 10 million illegal aliens in this country and the continuing flood, the over-worked, largely understaffed Border Patrol has been assigned a new shit detail: picking up the tons of trash left in the wake of border-sneaking illegals coming across the border with Mexico. According to a story in the *Wall Street Journal*, the Border Patrol has agreed to work with other agencies on environmental issues in Arizona and



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New Mexico, and agents say they have been told to pick up the trash left by the stream of illegals, and to watch out for endangered animals. Bud Tuffy, an official with the agent's union in Tucson, noted that agents don't have the truck space for trash.

The Border Patrol told the *WSJ* that the instructions and trash bags placed in patrol vehicles are "suggestions" and not rules. Said Tucson-area Border Patrol official Ron Colburn, "if there's an opportunity to make the world a better place, take advantage of it." This new green effort includes instruction to agents on the fragility of the Southwest deserts.

## Kornse Defense Fund

A legal defense fund has been established for Donald C. Kornse, Jr. (see "Surplus Grief," Apr. '00) the Marine set upon by the BATF acting on the spurious accusations of a former spouse. Point of Contact for the Donald C. Kornse, Jr. Legal Defense Fund is: Brandon Anderson, Asst. VP, First Union National Bank, 339 Russ Ave., NC 2405, Waynesville, NC 28786. The account number is 1010040350055; phone and fax for Mr. Anderson are 828-456-2315 and 828-456-2327.

For details, check the story in April 2000, or contact Don Kornse at 828-452-7379.

## Russian Air Faltering, Says *Aviation Week*

According to an exclusive report in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, the once-formidable Soviet air force has degenerated into a faltering, demoralized force unable to keep its planes in the air or its pilots trained. About a dozen

experts from seven countries met with AW&ST reporters, agreeing that the situation is a great deal worse than is acknowledged by the Russian government. Many Russian pilots, for instance, are receiving only 10 hours a year flight time, and of the some 2,000 aircraft in the Russian air force inventory, only 46% reportedly are serviceable. Although some sectors of the air establishment, such as the Sukhoi design bureau, continue to do well because of sales to China and India, there is an increasing problem with counterfeit spare parts being produced and bootlegged by financially strapped component manufacturers.

## Bill Would Alter FPI

What company makes more than 300 products, has annual revenue of \$600 million, and sells 40% of their goods to the Defense Department — who by law must buy it? Federal Prison Industries, a government-owned corporation within the Justice Department's Bureau of Prisons, created in 1934 to provide jobs for federal prisoners. Since, by law, federal agencies must buy from FPI as long as the goods are "substantially similar in quality, cost and availability" to commercial goods, this has given them a tremendous advantage for nearly 80 years, over with small businesses who would like to do business with the federal government.

The Federal Prison Industries Competition in Contracting Act of 2001, introduced in the House and backed by a wide coalition of legislators and industry, would change that. Bipartisan support for the bill in both the house and senate makes eventual passage likely.

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## Swiss Army To Drop Bikes

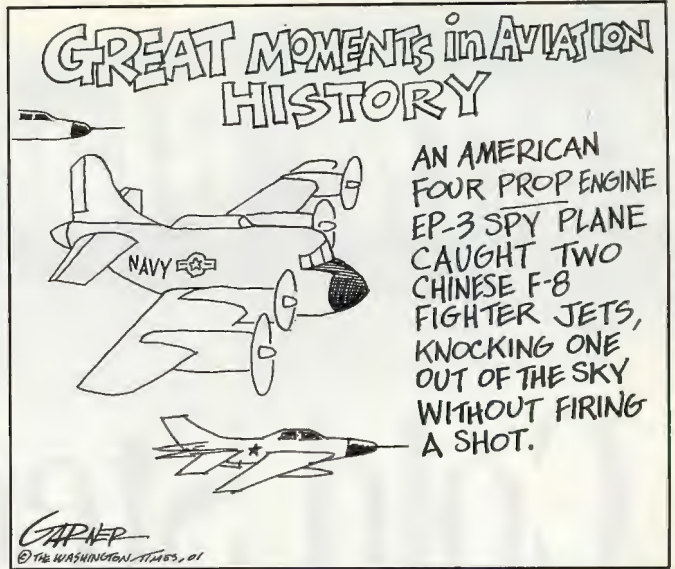
Started in 1891, the Swiss Army bicycle brigade evolved into the backbone of the Swiss defense force. Relying heavily on quickly mustered citizen soldiers, the Swiss Army found that the bicyclists were swifter and more discreet than foot infantry or motorized units.

The unit, however, is now falling victim to advances in more sophisticated technology. There is a rumble among the ranks, but a more muted one than met the end of the military carrier pigeon service in 1994, or the horse cavalry in 1973. Plans to eliminate the bike brigades are still being drafted, and are yet to be debated by parliament; if adopted, they would become law in 2003. "We ask ourselves why the cyclists should go," a chemistry lab assistant told AP, "we are quick and silent. And we don't need gas."

Recent models of the Swiss army bike feature seven gears, and mounts for machineguns, rocket launchers, grenade launchers and basic army kit. The bike weighs 48 pounds, and can carry a rider and load of 330 pounds.

## NSSF Dumps New Orleans For Vegas

The National Shooting Sports Foundation has canceled its plans for the 2004 SHOT Show in New Orleans, due to reduced dealer attendance at the last show in New Orleans. "It is no secret that our industry feels distinctly unwelcome in the Crescent City by virtue of Mayor Morial's lawsuit against not only legitimate and respectable firearms manufacturers, but also against the National Shooting Sports Foundation itself.



As you know, it was only through the strongly supportive efforts of Governor Foster that our Board made the difficult decision to bring SHOT Show to New Orleans in 2001. Unfortunately, our recent experience does not justify future shows in New Orleans in the foreseeable future," stated Bob Delday, chairman of the SHOT Show committee.

The NSSF has reserved the Las Vegas Convention Center for the dates 12-15 February 2004. "These new Las Vegas dates are somewhat later than our traditional cycle," noted Delfay, "but the NSSF Board had little doubt that these February dates in Las Vegas would be preferable to earlier dates in New Orleans." ✕

# COMBAT



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9 mm Luger



**CZ 85 Combat**  
9 mm Luger

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**Technology... Accuracy... Performance**

# Battle Blades

Text & Photos by Bill Bagwell

## Cold Steel's Kukri

Cold Steel is one of the more aggressive and innovative of today's cutlery companies. Since the 1980s they have been at the forefront of commercial edged weaponry. Under the guidance of company president Lynn Thompson, Cold Steel has consistently sought to bring to market products of high quality and high performance. Lynn Thompson is far from your typical company president or CEO, and his active lifestyle and up front personality have brought a focus to the Cold Steel product line that is lacking in some of the other cutlery manufacturers. Thompson is also both astute and pragmatic. Being such, he wants products that work, and realizes that the most effective blade designs often come from true blade cultures or from an earlier era.

There is a lot of hype and outright BS employed in the marketing of cutlery, especially that focused on the tactical and military arenas. While Thompson uses hype, and large

amounts of it on occasion to advertise the Cold Steel line, he does not resort to BS. He doesn't have to. Lynn Thompson and Cold Steel do their homework and research, and real-world testing tells them what they need to know about their knives and how they work. When Cold Steel wanted an exotic, extremely powerful knife to augment the Trailmaster Bowie, they went halfway around the world to the forested slopes of the Himalayas in Nepal. They brought back the Gurkha Kukri.

The national knife of Nepal, and one of the world's true Battle Blades that survives to this day, the kukri was probably an agricultural tool before it gained renown as a weapon. It has evolved into a single edged blade about 12 inches long with a pronounced downward curve on the blade that widens considerably into a compound curve as the blade nears the point. This enables one to deliver a tremendous amount of force in a blow with a minimum expenditure of muscular effort. The kukri is a prime example of blade geometry being focused for a single maximum effect. The mass placement and compound curvature of the blade combine to give the kukri near legendary chopping power.

The Gurkha reputation for skill at arms is hard earned and well deserved. These men have proven their mettle and devotion to duty to the British Crown with an unblemished service record that dates back more than 180 years. A telling illustration of the respect held for Gurkhas and their national knife came out of the Falklands War when a unit of the Argentine army surrendered to an element of the Scots Guards. Following a sharp encounter, the Scots had forced the Argentines to withdraw. As the Argentines retreated in good order from the advancing Scots, they were met by a patrol from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles. The Argentines immediately halted, did and abrupt about-face, and surrendered to the Scots Guard rather than face a Gurkha patrol. This sort of fighting reputation did not happen by accident.



Cold Steel president, Lynn Thompson severs 2-inch diameter bamboo with the kukri.

Part of the reputation is due to the Gurkha themselves, both for their courage and their developed skill with this particular knife. The kukri does have some serious deficiencies as a fighting knife that the Gurkhas have managed to overcome. Because there is a cutting edge on only one side, the kukri has no backstroke cutting capability unless you rotate your wrist. The very low point inhibits your stabbing capability, and the guardless handle offers its user absolutely no hand protection. The great emphasis on power and swing weight makes the knife difficult to recover from a stroke if you swing and miss.

It is that legendary chopping power that makes the kukri what it is. There are several well-documented instances of sentry removal during WWII that describe a sentry with his skull split down into his sternum. There are battlefield reports of complete decapitations of the enemy by the Gurkhas, as well. Make no mistake: 180 years of this kind of performance does not hurt one's reputation for skill at arms.

As with any edged weapon, there are specialized techniques that enable one to get the most out of the combat capabilities of the kukri. Cold Steel's "Cut But Don't Get Cut" seminars delve into kukri technique, and those wanting to gain a high degree of proficiency with the kukri as a weapon are advised to contact Cold Steel and take the course. You'll learn kukri technique and a lot more besides.

Cold Steel's kukri itself is an impressive piece of work. Compared to other commercial kukris we have tested, the fit and finish of the Cold Steel offering is far and away the best that we have examined. The satin finished blade is a full 5/16-inch thick. It is ground with perfect symmetry, and a nice distal taper for the last 5-1/2 inches of the 12-inch blade make this one of the best balanced kukris we have seen, even better than some of the hand forged originals that we have examined and used. Cold Steel's Carbon V steel is used on the kukri, and it is delivered razor sharp and holds an edge. The Kraton handle is shaped in the manner of the traditional kukris, and the checkering provides a secure grip.

The kydex sheath is very well-made, and in keeping with the rest of the package, exhibits a high level of workmanship. It attaches to the belt by means of a black nylon belt loop that has a well-thought-out double

lock snap and velcro-type release. There is a small hole of 1/4-inch or so in the back side of the sheath near the tip for water drainage. The kukri itself is a very secure snap fit into the sheath. The only criticism of the sheath arrangement is that while it is dead silent and rattle-proof in the carry mode, it is impossible to remove the kukri from the sheath without an annoying rattle caused by



*The author buries the blade of Cold Steel's kukri over 2-1/2 inches into a seasoned elm log.*

the blade rubbing on the kydex as it is deployed. This is characteristic of any kydex sheath, not just this one from Cold Steel, but any weapon, especially an edged one, should be capable of silent deployment.

It was said earlier that Lynn Thompson is an astute man. He demonstrated this by not changing the traditional handle contour of the kukri, as it is a perfectly evolved shape for the task at hand. He demonstrated it again when he did change to blade shape of the Cold Steel kukri slightly from the hand forged originals. The original village forged kukris are forged with a thin blade that swells abruptly at the spine to give a cross section to the blade that is the same as the top of an I-beam. This is one of the strongest and most resistant shapes to lateral stress known to engineering for its weight. It is a credit to the unlettered village

bladesmiths of Nepal that they discovered the engineering value of the I-beam cross section and applied its engineering principle to give strength to the village forged blades.

The Cold Steel kukri is a little different. Because it is laser cut to precise dimensions from precision ground bar stock, very close dimensional tolerances can be held in its manufacture, and the weight and, thus, balance of the Cold Steel kukri can be rigidly controlled. The blade of the Cold Steel kukri is also wider than most of the originals, being a full 2-1/4 inches wide at the widest point. This does two things for the weapon's function of the Cold Steel kukri, and both of them are good. By having a wider blade near the point, the curvature of the cutting edge can be maximized for optimum slicing efficiency. The wider blade also gives a much larger wound channel.

Think about it. A blade with awesome power that slices with maximum effect. No wonder heads and arms fall off. This is applied practical engineering of a very high level. Couple this with a blade that on a stabbing stroke leaves a wound channel 2-1/4 inches wide and you have a blade that when chopping or stabbing delivers extreme terminal performance. Want a comparison? The entry wound from a .45 ACP is just .45 inches in diameter. The Cold Steel kukri delivers a wound channel over five times as large in flesh. You simply cannot take a hit from this kukri and continue to fight.

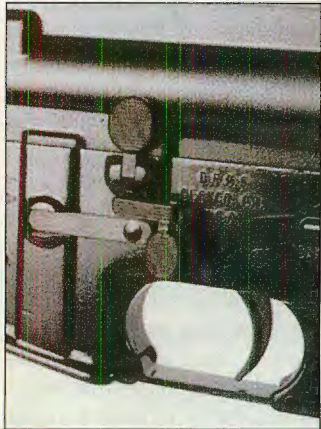
Having said all of that, I do not feel that the kukri is the best pure fighting knife because of the reasons stated earlier. It is, however, a formidable edged weapon and a true Battle Blade. It is a sterling all-around tool that makes a better survival or camp knife than almost all of those aimed specifically at the survival market. Lynn Thompson tells me that there will be a military version of the Cold Steel kukri with an all black finish on the market in the next few months. It has a projected price tag in the \$160 range, and should be a direct center hit in the survival kukri market. As it now stands, the Cold Steel kukri remains alone in quality and performance at the top of the kukri ladder. These are second to none, and offer more performance than the originals.

*For more information, contact Cold Steel, Dept. SOF, 3036-A Seaborg Ave., Ventura, CA 93003; phone: 800-255-4716. ✕*

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

## Tactical Bolt Catch

A worthy AR accessory is this new Tactical Bolt Catch from DPMS. It has a larger bolt release pad that is far easier to locate and activate under stress, and a lower extended pad, which is used to hold the bolt carrier back when the magazine is not installed. This feature is excellent for tactical training when the magazine must be removed. The

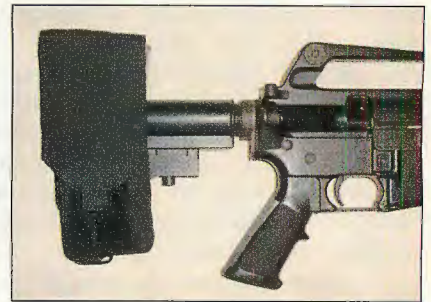


Tactical Bolt Catch is easy to install by removing the exterior roll pin and installing the new roll pin, which is included. Installation at DPMS is also available. This part number LR-11T retails for \$14.95 and is available from Defense Procurement Manufacturing Services, Inc., Dept SOF, 13983 Industry Ave., Becker, MN 55308; phone: 763-261-5600; fax: 763-261-5599.

shoulder, weapon right-side-up under the arm and facing forward). This in turn reduces arm fatigue and increases safety and speed of deployment.

This device mounts securely to the weapon with mil-spec nylon webbing, buckle, and hook-and-loop system. It is made from 1000 denier Cordura(R) fabric and its webbing is reinforced at stress points, and has mil-spec black brass drainage grommets. Strong, straightforward and efficient gear that's good to go. Like we have come to expect from Spec-Ops Brands.

Ask for these at your PX/BX or quality outdoor or shooting store. For the dealer nearest you contact: Best Made Designs, Dept. SOF, 1601 W. 15th St., Monahans, TX 79756; phone: 866-SPEC-OPS.



## Ready-Fire Mode

The .30 carbine of our generation was a handy little piece designed to replace the pistol, and as such was a good arm. When it got to be used a lot by troops who should have been carrying a rifle, the deficiency of its cartridge for a battle rifle became apparent and they issued the M2 automatic version on the theory that if you weren't going to hit him hard, you had to hit him often. Thirty-round magazines helped, as did a magazine pouch with loops generous enough to fit either a web belt or the stock of the weapon, so fresh ammo was at the ready even when you were at the prone. The stock of a weapon can be a handy place to have the next fresh magazine.

That is still true today, and Spec-Ops Brands has come out with a buttstock magazine pouch, which holds either 20- or 30-round magazines of 5.56x45, and which incorporates a much-needed top-mounted swivel for the sling. It mounts

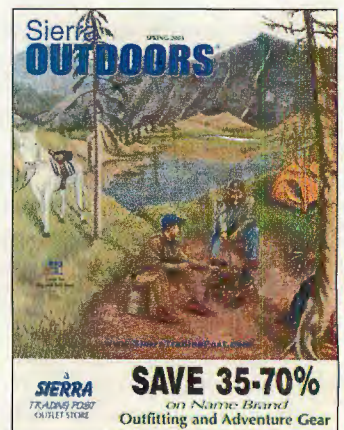


securely to most military-style .223 rifles (with a special model for the CAR-15/M4-style AR butt), positions the ammo for instant access, and allows the use of a standard sling in the "ready-fire mode" (with sling over-the-

## Sierra Outdoors

Magazine editors, and probably most of their readers, have to weigh every two-dollar purchase between paychecks, so it's always a great warm-fuzzy to come across an outfit like Sierra Outdoors, a supplier of premium outdoor gear and clothing at genuine discount prices. We're talking top-quality stuff (as in the right stuff), that is for sale at 30-70% off list price because it is discontinued, odd lots or cosmetic seconds of top-name lines. As one born a cosmetic second, we're here to tell you that the only place the difference will be noticed is in your wallet. Boots, foul-weather gear, binos, premium rifle scopes, packs, tents, clothing and more.

Here at SOF we're lucky to be within driving distance since their store is just up in Cheyenne — but the good news is that they also have a mail-order service, and you can also call to charge your order, or fax it in. They ship right away, guarantee your satisfaction, and have one of the best reputations in the industry for fair dealing. Excellent gear, unbeatable prices, great people to do business with! Sierra Outdoors, Dept. SOF, 5025 Campstool Rd., Cheyenne, WY 82007-1898; order at 800-713-4534; fax: 800-378-8946. Their catalog line is so heavily discounted, we guarantee your significant other will let you order stuff out of it. ☘



# Bye Bye Las Vegas - Hello Raton, New Mexico!



## YES, IT'S TRUE.

The SOF Three Gun Match and Convention has been renamed the "SOF/Whittington Center World Championship Three Gun Tactical Response Benefit Match, Shoot Fest and Gun Show." All profits will be donated to the NRA Whittington Center. Entry fees for the Match will be \$200. Shooters will be limited to 200. Shooters will be required to assist as range officers. Match will be held 6-9 September 2001.

Registration begins at 1600 hours, 5 September.

The Awards Barbeque will be held Sunday, 9 September.

**In addition to shooting in the Match, shooters will receive the same items and access as the Shoot Fest participants. Shoot Fest participants' registration fee is \$100, for which you will receive the following:**

- One year subscription to Soldier of Fortune Magazine.
- Shoot Fest T-Shirt.
- Access to the match.
- Outdoor Awards Barbeque.
- Participation in the "hands-on" manufacturers' demonstrations. Free ammo.
- Access to the gun show.
- Access to seminars sponsored by exhibitors.
- Access to a range where you can fire your personal weapons or weapons provided by SOF.
- The \$15 informal daily range fee is included.
- Sporting clays, trap and skeet shooting available for an additional fee.
- Socializing in the evenings at the headquarters hotel, the Holiday Classic, in Raton, NM, which has a large domed area and pool. Live country & western music will liven up the festivities.

## EXHIBITORS

Commercial vendors. Each 10x10 space will cost \$200. If vendor has a mobile, wheeled exhibit, the Center has space to accommodate it.

Gun Show vendors. Each "table" will cost \$60.

Set up on 5 September, tear down 9 September.

## LOGISTICS

Headquarters Hotel is the Holiday Classic in Raton. It has 59 rooms and the courtyard rooms face a domed area 135x80 feet, which includes a pool for socializing, getting hammered, or whatever. Phone: 1-800-255-8879. Cost: King or double, \$45.95 per room plus tax. Only 59 rooms — first come, first served!

The Whittington Center has 125 RV campsites as well as competitor housing, log cabins, housekeeping cabins and backcountry cabins. For rates, check the Whittington Center website at [www.nrawc.org](http://www.nrawc.org) or call 505-445-3615.

Travel: If you do not drive, you will have to fly into Albuquerque, NM or Colorado Springs, CO. SOF recommends you use our travel agency, Pathways Travel, for booking your flight schedules. Phone: 1-800-336-7588. Ask for Lavina Vohlken or Gaynelle Tuck, or e-mail: [Lavinav@uswest.net](mailto:Lavinav@uswest.net). We will have a recommendation for car rental by the time you read this.

For further information and application blanks, write: Match/Shoot Fest/Gun Show, c/o SOF, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO, 80303, or go to the SOF website, [www.sofmag.com](http://www.sofmag.com), or call Steve Schreiner at 303-449-3750 ext. 306.

Join us at one of the finest shooting facilities in the world, located in the wide open spaces of the Old West. Shoot and party. Mail your application today!

Looking forward to a great Match, Shoot Fest and Gun Show.

— Robert K. Brown  
Editor/Publisher

# WORLD SITREP



1

## UNITED STATES

**Question:** USMC blames faulty computer software and flight control system on V-22 Osprey for recent crash, and perhaps previous fatal accidents. Corps still wants to purchase 360 to replace aging CH-46 and CH-53 transport choppers. • **Chinese Fire Drill:** Near-future American ability to eavesdrop on PRC subs, which might house cruise missiles, and/or Russian destroyers with suspected nuke-tipped missiles suffers setback as U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II surveillance aircraft forced down on Hainan Island, a Chinese sex and sin paradise, which is home to vast electronic intel complex. Taiwan newspaper reports that second F-8 fired warning cannon bursts which forced plane to land. • **Did The Lyin' King Know?** It's being reported that Clinton Administration was warned more than a year ago that PRC jets were buzzing U.S. planes and ships in South China Sea. Congress was never briefed. • **PRC Defector Sings:** Lt. Col. Xu Junping tells volumes about Chinese military's stateside espionage activities. • **The bin Laden Factor?** Jayna Davis, formerly of KFOR-TV, in OKC, says on "The O'Reilly Factor" that she's gathered evidence of foreign conspiracy in bombing of Murrah Building. FBI failed to investigate her claims.

4

## LAOS

Government reshuffle promises to thrust Laos out of economic isolation, and strengthen ties with PRC — not Vietnam.

5

## PAKISTAN

**Among The Greatest:** One of Golden Crescent nations (along with Iran and Lebanon) which has replaced Golden Triangle as world's largest opium-producing area. Turkey, also, is throwing-in with the others as heroin refineries continue to spring-up.

9

## VIETNAM

**Persecution:** Government continues its put-down of Montagnard demonstrations in Central Highlands. The 'Yards want further self-determination. Reports filter to the West of atrocities against Montagnards, as well as Christian and Buddhist elements of highlands population.

14

2

10

## SOUTH KOREA

**"You Are My Sunshine":** Policy of constructive engagement with the North continues to move along, focusing on economic aid and development.

13

## ENGLAND

**The Fatwa Connection:** Muslim groups in Canada, France, Turkey and Italy allegedly motivated to terrorist actions by London-based "The Serpent of the Thames." French investigators made public their report which implicates Ahmed Ressay, who allegedly attempted to smuggle a bomb into U.S. • **Drugs Are Us:** Controversial BBC-TV program says smack, cannabis and coke are A-OK. England now has some 10 million illegal druggies; up from about one million back in the 1960s.

14

## ECUADOR

**Manta From Heaven:** Hub of U.S. surveillance flights over Colombia and elsewhere in South America will receive at least \$62 million to improve runway. U.S. personnel stationed there will hit 400 by October 2001.

2

### COLOMBIA

**Rumor Mill:** U.S. buildup continues which might increase the \$1.3-billion ceiling. Fears persist that U.S. troops might see active combat, if they haven't already. • **Hostile Action:** FARC Gs hit and capture small hamlet called Neiva. No estimate on casualties. • **Fruits Of Prolonged Civil War:** Unemployment of 19.7% in cities is highest ever. Since 1996, 1.1 million have relocated to other countries.

3

### CHINA

**Long Memory:** Several U.S. affronts likely catalysts to spy plane incident, including American scuttling of '98 Israel-PRC deal of \$2.5 billion in Phalcon Airborne warning and Control System aircraft; bombing of PRC fiber-optics plant outside Belgrade and '99 bombing of PRC Embassy, also in Belgrade. • **No Help For Taiwan?** PRC hopes that crisis will redirect American diplomatic efforts back to Beijing, rather than Taiwan, where efforts have been of late. • **Influence Meddling:** PRC has Bush and Republicans in crosshairs via diplomacy and deal-making to bring Bush Administration into pro-China agenda. Preventing defensive arms sales to Taiwan is on front burner.

6

### TAIWAN

**Nervously Waiting:** Plenty of anxiety over U.S. plane incident. Many wonder if U.S. will acquiesce in blackmail operation which will stall — or altogether cancel — future defensive arms deals. Does "Paper Tiger" sound familiar? • **Too Close For Comfort:** Nerves a bit frayed over PRC's construction of short-range missile base just 135 miles from Taiwan's shore.

7

### ISRAEL

**Shifts To Warfighting:** Sharon orders series of air attacks on Palestinian targets on West Bank and Gaza Strip, including AO of Arafats's elite Force 17. But will Israeli hawks line-up enough support for continuing hard-ball tactics? • **Just Say No:** Urged U.S. to veto UN observer force to protect Palestinians. U.S. complied.

8

### KOSOVO

**Wild Cards:** U.S. must rein in KLA rebels, which it supplied and trained, before they cause Balkan explosion. Toss into the mix Albanian insurgents and you have massive volatile potential. American troops are caught in the middle and could pose ready targets.

13

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### BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**Splitsville?** Five-year-old state faces dissolution. Ultrationalists of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in Bosnia have declared self-rule government.

12

### ANGOLA

**UNITA Lives!** Forces hit town of Calomboloca, 80 clicks from Luanda. Angolan government, however, recaptured area.

15

15

### AUSTRALIA

**Eyes Have It:** Joint Defence Space Research Facility at Pine Gap, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, is among 30, or so, other joint U.S.-Australian facilities. Pine Gap is one of globe's largest satellite ground-control stations.

16

### NORTH KOREA

**To Sri Lanka With Love:** According to video analyzed by *Jane's*, provides Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) with stealth-designed watercraft and weapons, including 107mm Katyusha rockets, fired in pairs from the lightweight tripod; range 8 clicks; weight 18 kg. This rare weapon is thought to be variant of Chinese Type 63 107mm launcher.

World Sitrep is compiled by the SOF staff with information from various media and correspondents.



# OLD WAR HORSES

by Steve Comus

## KEEP 'EM SHOOTING

### 1891 Mosin-Nagant



Few rifles were destined to see manufacture and military issue that would span the period from prepowered flight, to space travel. But the Model 1891 Mosin-Nagant did, and it is still an item of issue in some backwaters today. The M1891 saw decades of Russian service before the Soviet Union was formed, and survived well past the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

The Model 1891 is unquestionably a credible battle rifle, and first among its salient features is that it was virtually soldier-proof: Just about any bonehead could learn to use one effectively. It was also rugged, capable of match accuracy, and relatively easy to manufacture in quantity.

The M1891 Mosin is of the generic turn-bolt persuasion and features a five-round fixed magazine, but is quite different from others in the bolt genre such as M98 Mausers and Lee-Enfields. If one were to trace its genealogy closely, it would be easy to guess Colonel Mosin was influenced more by the 1871 Mauser, Mannlicher, Spitalsky and 1888 German

Commission designs than anything else.

The M1891 shoots the rimmed 7.62x54R cartridge, and an action and magazine have unique requirements if they are to feed and function with rimmed rounds. The M1891's magazine is the finest device of its kind ever used in a bolt-action rifle: There is *never* a problem with feeding, due to overlapping rims that get into each other's way.

The basic M1891 rifle sports a 31.2-inch barrel with nominal bore dimensions of .300 bore (three "lines" in the original Russian measure, where one line equaled 1/10 inch) and .314 groove. Rifling is four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.5 inches. It is the .300 bore dimension that makes it a 7.62mm proposition. However, the nominal .314 groove dimension separates it from the rest of the world's view of a .30 caliber rifle. Military bullets for the 7.62x54R are .310-inch in diameter, as compared to the .308 of the normal .30 caliber.

It is not surprising that a rifle made in various countries over most of a century will exhibit actual dimensions that vary from nominal spec. The author has measured groove diameters ranging from .308 to .316. Although the Mosin-Nagant is one of the most common surplus bolt-action rifles on the market today, the supply of surplus military ammunition for it is dwindling. Thus, shooters of this rifle will find that handloading



The Mosin loads from the top, either singly, or via stripper clip as shown here. The unique magazine reliably feeds its rimmed cartridges (right) Sights on Mosins made after the revolution are graduated in meters; this Czarist-era model is graduated in arshins.



# BARRETT

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Delivery!

## MODEL 99

.50 Caliber  
Single Shot Bolt Action Rifle



## MODEL 95

.50 Caliber  
Bolt Action Rifle



## MODEL 82A1

.50 Caliber  
Semi-Automatic Rifle

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will range from a good idea to an eventual necessity.

In addition to Russia and the former USSR, the M1891 has been manufactured in and carried to war by other countries, such as Finland, Poland, China — and the United States. That's right, U.S. troops serving with the American Expeditionary Force that invaded Russia during the Bolshevik revolution were issued U.S.-made M1891s that had been made for the defunct imperial government, because these U.S. troops were going where supplies of that ammo were assumed to be available.

Those rifles were just some of the 250,000 M1891s produced in the United States for the Czar before WWI and the Russian Revolution. They were produced by New England



*The Mosin bolt is readily removed for cleaning by retracting to the rear, pulling the trigger, and withdrawing it. (inset) Typical reloads include author's homemade 174-grain JHP built on a Corbin swaging setup, Sierra 174-grain match bullet, Hornady 180-grain round nose, and Hornady 123-grain soft point.*

Westinghouse (of air brake fame) and by Remington. Except for the M1891 rifles produced by Sako in Finland, those manufactured by Remington and Westinghouse are among the most finely made. Certainly they were among the most well-finished. When the Czars were no longer able to pay for the rifles, Uncle Sam bought substantial numbers and they were used for training, secondary-issue and many eventually sold through the DCM.

Although the barrels on the basic M1891 rifles are slightly more than 31 inches long, the variants of this model through the years have sported many other lengths of tube, with shorter variants having barrels of more-or-less 20 1/2 inches.

Beyond reliability under virtually any condition, there are characteristics of the M1891 that deserve mention. For example, the action is quite strong, and because its two massive front locking lugs travel vertically and lock horizontally, the prospect of escaping powder gases hitting the shooter in the eye from a failed cartridge casing as one might encounter with the Mauser design is not a problem.

Also, since the ammunition is rimmed, chamber dimensions can be sloppy and still not be as dangerous as would be the case with rimless ammo, as headspacing is on the rim.

It should be noted that the rim of the 7.62x54R is a bit different from most, being much thinner on the outside than it is where it meets the case head. This contributes to better feeding — and arcane discussions over whether it should be called the 7.62x54R or 7.62x53R round.

The M1891 loads through an open bolt, and the ammuni-

tion can be single-fed directly into the chamber, loaded into the magazine singly, or charged into the magazine via a stripper clip. Unlike other Mannlicher-inspired magazines, it does not require an en-bloc clip.

The magazine itself is an in-line proposition that features a fairly complicated but very reliable articulated linkage on the follower, with leaf springs and arms. The body of the magazine juts out of the bottom of the rifle, and forms the front of the trigger guard. This is substantial steel, and its configuration precludes any damage to rounds in the magazine when the rifle is fired. Rounds in the magazine are readily unloaded by releasing the catch at the rear of the floor plate.

But the most fascinating feature of the magazine involves a small finger of spring steel that juts out from the left wall of the action about a half-inch below the bottom of the bolt when the bolt is closed. This squared-off finger is just below the spring-loaded ejector, which also serves as a keeper for the "ready" round. These two spring steel pieces work in concert as the action is cycled and are responsible for making this one of the most positive feeding magazine systems ever designed.

What happens is that the little finger holds the first four rounds securely in the magazine under pressure from the follower/spring linkage. The fifth, or top, cartridge rests above the finger, but below the ejector. And the ejector prevents the top round from bouncing around, or even falling out should the rifle be held upside down.

This means that the cartridge that is to be fed from the magazine is rather "loose," with no spring pressure upon it: It is ready to be fed forward and upward into the chamber. Mill cuts in the body of the receiver guide the cartridge by the body and rim as it goes forward and do not let it out of their grasp until it is far enough forward that it has to go into the chamber. The small finger does not release the next round from the magazine

into the ready mode until the bolt is closed. This entire series of actions afford an uncommonly positive feed.

The face of the bolt head is recessed slightly, and firing-pin protrusion can be adjusted via a slot on the rear of the cocking piece.

The bolt body is two-piece, and the firing pin is one piece. To engage the manual safety, it is necessary to pull the cocking piece at the rear of the bolt rearward and rotate the entire assembly counter-clockwise. This is awkward and can be difficult with cold hands — without doubt the only clumsy feature on this rifle.

To remove the bolt for cleaning the rifle, merely open the bolt, move it all the way rearward and then pull on the trigger as you remove the bolt completely. The bolt itself is readily disassembled without tools.

The extractor on the M1891 is a small spring steel claw. It is often compared to the Sako extractor, but it really is a variation of the extractor found on the M1888 German Commission rifle and other European rifles of the 19th Century. Such devices pre-date the modern Sako design.

Sights on most issue M1891 rifles are a combination of triangular front sight and open rear sight, both mounted on the barrel. The rear sight is both a tangent and ladder design, with marked graduations in hundreds of meters: Early production for the Czars were graduated in *arshins*,

*Continued on page 86*



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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# FIGHTING HOLSTERS

by Bob Arganbright

This is my first "Fighting Holsters" column and I will do my best to keep it entertaining, informational and fun. We will examine holsters of all types. Reader input is important, so feel free to contact me in care of *SOF* and let us know of any special interests.

Who is Bob Arganbright and why is he writing about fighting holsters? I am a hobby shooter who has been shooting mostly handguns for over 40 years. Always fascinated by personal weapons, I was bitten by the fast draw bug in the late 1950s while watching one of the many then new "adult" TV westerns. In 1959 there were 27 prime-time westerns on the three major networks. Being a high school student of modest means, I attempted to construct a fast draw rig rather than spend the unheard of sum of \$39.95 for the excellent Arvo Ojala Hollywood Fast Draw Holster. While today I purchase, use and collect the finest of available holsters, I have continued working with leather and am capable of producing professional-quality holsters. Having made them myself, as well as using them for nearly half a century, I know what to look for in a top-quality holster.

In the shooting world, I still compete in western fast draw competitions. Though no longer active, I attended the IPSC founding conference and I am a charter life member of USPSA. I com-



*The author's Colt SA with Fast Draw modified hammer, fits perfectly in the beaded Redwing-style holster. (below) The steel-lined "Thunderbolt" was the ultimate speed holster for the Colt Government model .45. The double-speed magazine pouch was also an original Anderson design.*



peted in the first Bianchi Cup and the first *SOF* Combat Match and Convention. I am a member of the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) and active in Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS). We will occasionally look at CAS holsters in "Fighting Holsters." My favorite handguns are the Colt Single Action Army (SAA) revolver for fun and a Bill Wilson-tuned Colt Government model .45 auto pistol for more serious use. I also occasionally use a 4-inch barrel S&W Model 19 revolver and I like a S&W J frame snub .38 in a pocket. So, with this background, let us examine two of my favorite holsters.

We will start with a holster I made, that is a copy of a Rodd Redwing holster originally made by Andy Anderson in his North Hollywood, Calif. "Gunfighter" shop some 40 years ago. Redwing was a Chickasaw Indian who made his living teaching Hollywood cowboys how to look good while shooting Indians. He was what was called the "Technical Adviser" on many classic westerns, such as *The Fastest Gun Alive*, *Shane*, *High Noon* and *One-Eyed Jacks*.

In addition, Rodd appeared as an exhibition shooter. His most spectacular stunt was to throw a knife with his gunhand,

and with one continuous motion draw and fire his Colt SAA revolver. The hurtling knife appeared to stick in the edge of the bullet hole in the target. Though a trick, imagine the manual dexterity and speed required to fire a shot before the knife stuck.

All of Rodd's handgun work was from a holster of his design. Not liking the heavy steel-lined fast draw holsters, Redwing constructed his holster from a thinner top grade cowhide with the rough side out, to appear to be buckskin. The holster was fully lined and had two corset stays inserted between the two layers of leather to hold the pouch open. This allowed the SA revolver to be easily thumb cocked before it was clear of the holster, the secret to the speed of the Hollywood fast draw.

When Rodd offered his rig commercially, he had it manufactured by his friend and legendary Hollywood holster

maker Andy Anderson. I was fortunate in obtaining a copy of the Redwing holster pattern from my friend, Victor Perez, who produces the Anderson "Gunfighter" line of holsters today. Using this pattern, I constructed a correct Rodd Redwing holster for my Colt SAA revolver. To add to the "Indian" appearance, I had a local Indian artist bead the face of the pouch before final assembly. While not the fastest of fast draw holsters, this holster is faster than its predecessors while maintaining the appearance of the traditional Mexican loop western holster.

Going from a fun holster for a fun gun, the Colt SAA sixgun, let us look at a classic serious speed holster for the serious Colt Government model .45 auto pistol. This classic was designed and produced in the early 1960s by Andy Anderson for the legendary Jeff Cooper when Cooper was still actively competing in what was then called "combat shooting." Cooper wanted a secure, yet super-fast, hip holster for the Colt .45 auto. The result was the Anderson "Thunderbolt." Anderson took one of his steel-lined fast draw holsters and turned it around, so that the main seam was down the front edge. This provided a natural front sight tunnel for the sharp edged front target sight of a Colt Goldcup. To prevent the premature discharge while drawing the cocked-and-locked Colt, the holster pouch fully enclosed the trigger guard. Security with the open top holster was provided by the first of the adjustable tension devices. The tension was adjusted by a "T" bolt placed on the face of the holster. An important feature of the "Thunderbolt" was the presentation of the gunbutt for a full three fingers shooting grip while the pistol was fully seated in the holster. The importance of this feature can not be over emphasized, as it is dangerous adjusting one's grip on the gun in mid-fast draw. The "Thunderbolt" was available in two versions, the classic Western buscadero style, as my sample, and a Walk-and-draw high-ride version as used by Col. Cooper. The Anderson "Thunderbolt" was the best of the speed rigs made for the big Colt auto pistol, and the last time I checked with Col. Cooper, he would not part with his.

Sources: Victor Leather, Dept. SOF, 1534 Catalina St., Dept. SOF, Burbank, CA 91505. ✕

# The Path To Victory



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# omega PROVEN Ground

BY FRANK W. JAMES

The 1911 pistol in .45 Auto caliber is for many shooters *the only* combat handgun. That it has survived for so many decades is a great testament to the soundness of its design and reliability. Now its popularity with 'combat shooters' of various descriptions is perhaps greater than it ever has been. This is especially important in view of the fact it was over 16 years ago when the United States military declared the treasured 1911 .45 Auto obsolete and adopted a high-capacity 9mm pistol — a decision that has to stand as one of the greatest testaments to counterfactual argument ever in the history of small arms.

Today, of course, 1911 pistols are offered by a variety of

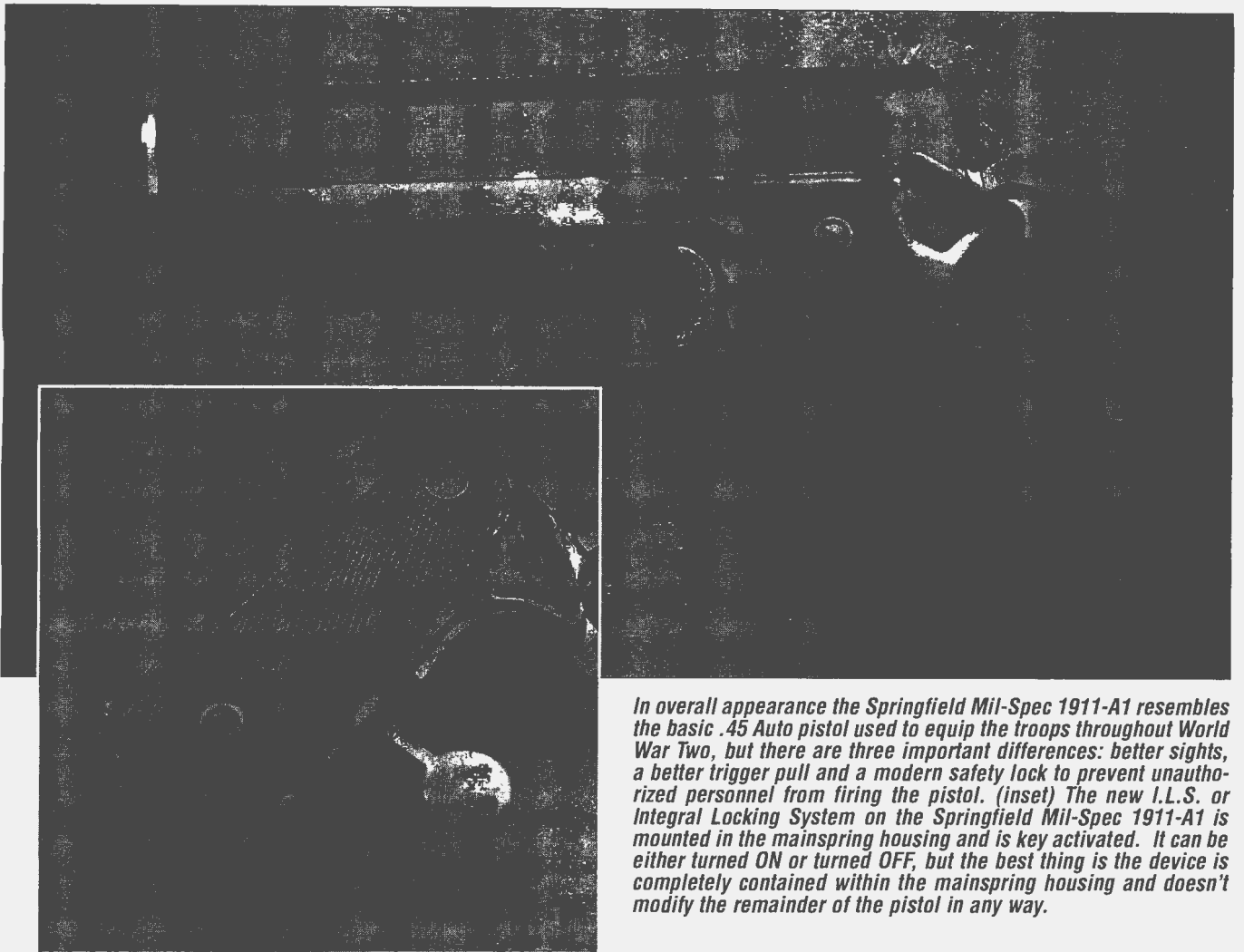
manufacturers and importers, but Springfield Armory (contact: Springfield Inc., 420 West Main St., Dept. SOF, Geneseo, IL 61254; toll free: 1-800-680-6866; fax: 309-944-5631; website: [www.springfieldarmory.com](http://www.springfieldarmory.com)) is a company that has always based their handgun product line on the classic 1911 pistol.

The current Springfield catalog offers a wide range and array of both semi-custom and custom made 1911 pistols in an expansive scale of pistols offering just about every imaginable feature to be found on any customer ordered 1911 pistol. Items like custom checkering, special order barrels and extravagant sighting systems all prove the adaptability of this

## The Springfield Armory Mil-Spec



## 1911-A1



*In overall appearance the Springfield Mil-Spec 1911-A1 resembles the basic .45 Auto pistol used to equip the troops throughout World War Two, but there are three important differences: better sights, a better trigger pull and a modern safety lock to prevent unauthorized personnel from firing the pistol. (inset) The new I.L.S. or Integral Locking System on the Springfield Mil-Spec 1911-A1 is mounted in the mainspring housing and is key activated. It can be either turned ON or turned OFF, but the best thing is the device is completely contained within the mainspring housing and doesn't modify the remainder of the pistol in any way.*

design, but it was the 1911's fundamental reliability and performance that earned accolades during service in combat from the trenches of World War I, in every theater of World War II, and continuing through Korea and the Vietnam War. In all of those conflicts the gun used was pretty basic and the military 1911 pistol offered none of the frills so often encountered today on a modern 1911 pistol. Are many of these accessories absolutely necessary?

The answer can be found quite quickly in the Springfield Armory Mil-Spec 1911-A1 model. It comes with a parkerized finish just like all the standard 1911 models used to equip our troops for several wars. There is a difference, however, between this basic Springfield Armory 1911-A1 model and the military examples of history.

First of all, this gun even though it is a basic plain-Jane-type of 1911 pistol comes with better sights and a better trigger pull commonly found on a military service .45 Automatic. These were the two primary shortcomings of the basic 1911 pistol that Springfield Armory has addressed quite well in their presentation of the Mil-Spec 1911-A1 pistol.

The sights consist of what Springfield labels their "3 Dot Hi-Viz Fixed Combat" sighting system, but the use of the term "Hi-Viz" does not refer in this instance to the use of brightly colored fiber optic inserts. Rather, it refers to a tall rear blade featuring two white dots on either side of a deep, square-cut U-notch. The front sight is a simple ramp blade with a single white dot on its angled rear face. The trigger

pull is listed in the factory brochure as being between 5 to 6.5 pounds in pull weight and the test pistol had a trigger pull that broke cleanly and regularly at an even 5.0 pounds.

There is something new on this military service grade pistol and that is the I.L.S. or Integral Locking System which is mounted in the mainspring housing on the rear of the grip. This is a patented locking system to render the pistol completely inert and inoperative when the supplied key is used to prevent unauthorized users from firing this pistol. The nice thing about this system is it is completely contained within the mainspring housing and doesn't modify the remainder of the pistol in any way, shape or form.

Shooting the Springfield Mil-Spec 1911-A1 revealed a very serviceable 1911 pistol and one that makes you wonder why you need all those extras. I could understand them on World War II production guns that were not meant to feed modern hollowpoint cartridges, only full metal jacket hardball ammo, but the test pistol consumed a wide variety of hollowpoint ammo without a single malfunction while yielding five-shot groups in the three-and-a-half to five-inch range at 25 yards.

The Springfield Mil-Spec 1911-A1 comes with one seven-round magazine, weighs 35.6 ounces and has a suggested retail price of \$559.00. For further information contact Springfield, Inc. or your Springfield Armory dealer. These guns prove you don't have to have an expensive .45 Auto pistol to have one that shoots well and functions reliably. ❧



In a sharp rebuke earlier this year, Iran warned that it will not stand idly by if the Jewish State were to attack Syria or Lebanon.

Quoting Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani in an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Watan* the Iranian defense minister said that Iran would retaliate in an "astounding and unexpected manner," though he didn't say what form the retaliation might take. This followed Israeli threats that it would take action against Damascus if violence along the Lebanese-Israeli border continues.

What is of concern to the West and to almost all the states in the Gulf is that for more than a decade Tehran has been engaged in a number of developmental programs that include weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Intelligence sources maintain that both its nuclear and missile R&D programs are well advanced.

In February, the CIA told President Bush that an Iranian atom bomb could not be ruled out. Also, in his most recent submission on Iranian weapons of destruction before the U.S. Senate last September, Robert D. Walpole, National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs, said that new missile threats from Iran were substantially different than before.

Washington intelligence circles no longer accept the charade of a "peaceful Iranian nuclear program," the basis on which Moscow maintains its assistance to Tehran in a variety of projects centered on rebuilding the Bushehr nuclear power complex. Also, it is accepted in the West that it is only a question of time before Tehran detonates its first test bomb. That could happen within two years, said the Langley report, and when it does, the consequences are likely to have a profound effect on a region twice the size of Western Europe.

The long-term ramifications are serious. "The probability that a missile with a WMD could be used against American forces or interests is higher today than during most of the Cold War and will continue to grow," Walpole declared. In addition, the emerging missile threats would involve considerably fewer missiles with less accuracy, yield, survivability, reliability and the range-payload capability than the hostile strategic Cold War forces that the U.S. faced for years, he said. Even so, "the new systems are regarded as threatening."

# ATOMS FOR ALLAH

## Iran: The World's Worst Nuclear Nightmare?

BY AL J. VENTER

He added that North Korea's space launch attempt, for instance, "had demonstrated — in a way that words alone could not — that the new long range missile threat is moving from the hypothetical to the real." Moreover, he said, many of the countries developing longer-range missiles "probably assess that the simple *threat* of their use would complicate American decision-making during crises, increase the cost of a U.S. victory, potentially deter Washington from pursuing certain objectives and provide independent deterrent and war-fighting capabilities."

### Special Problem

Tehran, Walpole indicated, was in a special category: "It has very active missile and WMD development and it is seeking foreign missile, nuclear, chemical and biological technologies." Also, Iran's ballistic missile program

was one of the largest in the Middle East, he reckoned.

Two weeks later, Mr. Robert Einhorn, Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation, disclosed in a confidential briefing before Congress that Russia was continuing to help Iran develop its nuclear capability. "While a number of other countries — including China and the Ukraine — had abandoned Iran's nuclear program, Russia remained the significant exception," he said, adding that the help being offered by Moscow in the construction of the Bushehr nuclear complex could allow Tehran "to use that technology to produce nuclear weapons."

At about the same time, a former CIA Mideast specialist, Reuel Marc Gerechta raised a comparative issue. Quoted by *The Washington Post*, he questioned whether, if Saddam Hussein — prior to Operation Desert Storm — had managed

to produce the bomb, whether America would have challenged his conquest of Kuwait? At the time, he disclosed, Iranian clerical circles "were abuzz with this nuclear debate."

As for the Iranian Islamic Republic's recent test firing of the Shahab 3 intermediate-range missile — whose primary mission is regarded by some as a possible delivery vehicle for a nuclear warhead — Gerecht said [Iran's] "clerical regime has clearly given us the answer." Tehran understood, as did Baghdad, that nuclear-tipped missiles would go a long way towards neutralizing the naval power of the United States, he declared.

"Backed by such weapons, Iran or Iraq could cajole, intimidate or even invade its neighbors, reasonably betting that Washington wouldn't eagerly play nuclear poker over oil wells." Mr. Gerecht suggested that with that kind of scenario in place, "America's alliances with Saudi Arabia and other Arab gulf states — Bahrain in particular with its critical port facilities for the U.S. Navy — could start to weaken.

"Although the Iranian nuclear missile is preferable to an Iraqi one — the clerics, unlike Saddam Hussein are not Hitlerian predators — its strategic impact on the projection of U.S. military force doesn't differ from Iraq's. A review of congressional debates and testimony before the Gulf War quickly reveals the extreme shakiness of our resolution to fight in the Middle East," said the former CIA specialist.

One of the possible ramifications of this development on Middle East's "always-explosive politics," he postulated, would be that "we should anticipate nuclear cooperation between Israel and Turkey."

#### With Help From Neutrals

Details have also emerged in Europe of a scandal involving the Swiss company Technology Trading, Ltd. (T&T) headquartered in Zurich. Over several years T&T has, in concert with other firms, shipped quantities of weapons and components

to Tehran, including 42 tons of "parts" for GHN-45 155mm artillery pieces. Illegal cargoes were flown out of Vienna-Schwechat Airport, Bratislava/Slovakia Airport and others.

At the heart of ongoing investigations initiated by a special commission of the EBT (Antiterrorism Task Force) and headed by a Swiss public prosecutor, is Swiss-resident weapons dealer Dieter Buehrle — who is the principal stockholder of the arms group Oerlikon-Buehrle and sole shareholder of T&T.

On the nuclear front, Western intelligence agencies agree that Tehran has made considerable progress in its quest towards developing nuclear weapons. There are dozens of verifiable cases of Iranian agents having been active in trying to acquire fissile or sensitive material from sources linked to the former Soviet Union (FSU). Also, nuclear research is taking place at various locations in the country. The Americans concede that in a country

as vast and, in places, as remote as the Gobi, it is impossible to keep track of all developments. Some of the details are known, having emanated from defectors.

According to Iranian expatriate sources — some linked to *Mojahedine-Khalq*, an Iranian opposition group in exile (classified as a terrorist organization by the State Department but apparently enjoying clandestine U.S. support) — there is already a growing nuclear cadre of "several thousand" personnel at work at various sites in Isfahan, 400 kilometers south of the capital. A second top-secret weapons design center is located at Moallam Kelaieh near the Caspian Sea. Like most other nuclear facilities, these are run by the nuclear unit of the top security organization, the Revolutionary Guards (*Pasdaran*) which falls directly under the office of the country's supreme spiritual leader Khomeini, and not Iran's President, Mohammed Khatami.

*Pasdaran* also controls the activities of a variety of revolutionary guerrilla movements in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. South Africa's fundamentalist *Qibla* organization — the military wing of *Pagad*, which has been responsible for almost 200 bombs in South Africa over the past three or four years — like others, had many of its members trained in Iran. Again, *Pasdaran* was involved. The same with Lebanon's *Hezbollah*, said another specialist who wished not be identified told *Soldier Of Fortune*. It was *Hezbollah's* military wing that was instrumental in ousting the IDF from South Lebanon last year.

Concurrently, Tehran puts emphasis on acquiring advanced foreign technology in all three WMD disciplines. For instance, Pakistan was asked for uranium gas centrifuge technology and agreed to train Iranian nuclear scientists at its Institute for Nuclear Science and Technology near Islamabad. Argentina, too, was approached on nuclear matters, as was South Africa. Before that,

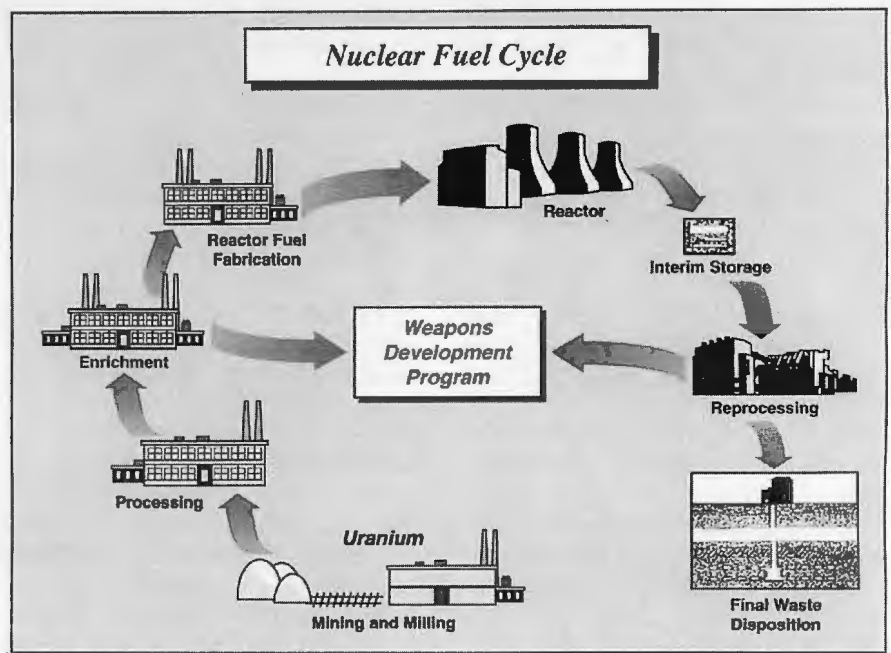


*Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks to thousands of worshippers last March at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic. The real power in Iran rests with the clerics — and the nuclear establishment is directly under the Ayatollah, not the president.*

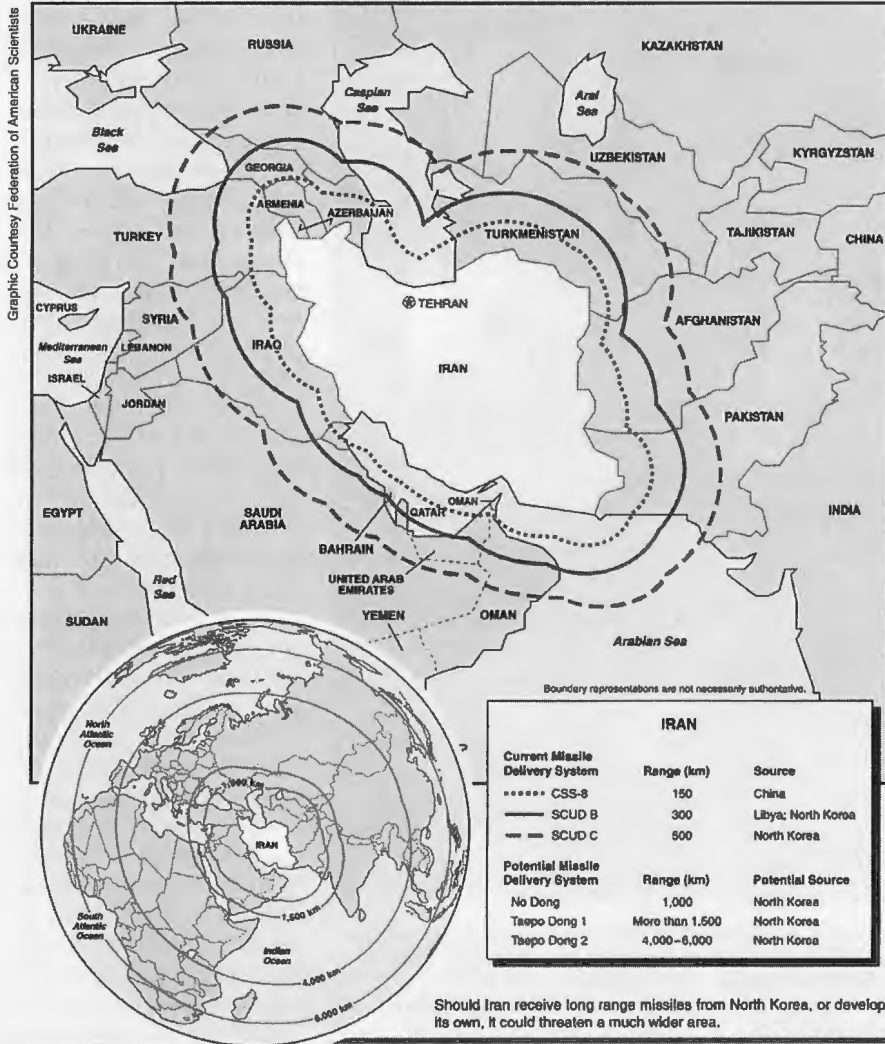
nuclear reactors were sought from China, Russia and India. Notably, Washington has been able to block only some of these projects. Other countries contacted by Iran were Poland, Czechoslovakia and Italy, but those results were mixed.

### Islamabomb

Arenas where Iranian has been most active include attempts to acquire weapons-useable nuclear materials — plutonium or bomb-grade uranium. In an unclassified report, The Rand Corporation estimated that it would need only about 4 kg of plutonium, or perhaps 15 kg of 90% Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU), to make a primitive atomic bomb in the kiloton range. This is the same implosion-type weapon that Iraq had been trying to develop before it was stopped by the consequences of the Gulf War: It was designed for a yield estimated at between 10 and 20 kilotons. Several other bodies, according to the Federation of American Scientists, reckon that as little as one kg of plutonium would be enough for



*Even in a "peaceful" nuclear program, there are two points at which material can be diverted to weapons manufacture: at the enrichment stage (where typical 3-5% U-235 would be converted to 90% weapons grade), and during the processing of spent reactor fuel, where plutonium recovered during this process could be used for a plutonium-based nuke. (below) Even with the missiles known to be in Iranian hands, they can threaten their neighbors — but with the missiles they now have under development, they can threaten the world with weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical, biological.*



small-scale nuclear device.

On the technical front, the most worrying development has been the recruitment of former Soviet nuclear scientists by Iran. Michael Eisenstadt has told us that an alleged German intelligence report cited by *Izvestia* said that 14 Russian nuclear scientists had found employment in Iran, together with 50 engineers and 200 technicians. Some of the work, he states, was related to ballistic-missile design. Russian press reports indicate that the going rate for a foreign nuclear scientist is about \$5,000. More is offered for those with "special" skills such as weaponization or the "hardening" of devices to be launched in a missile.

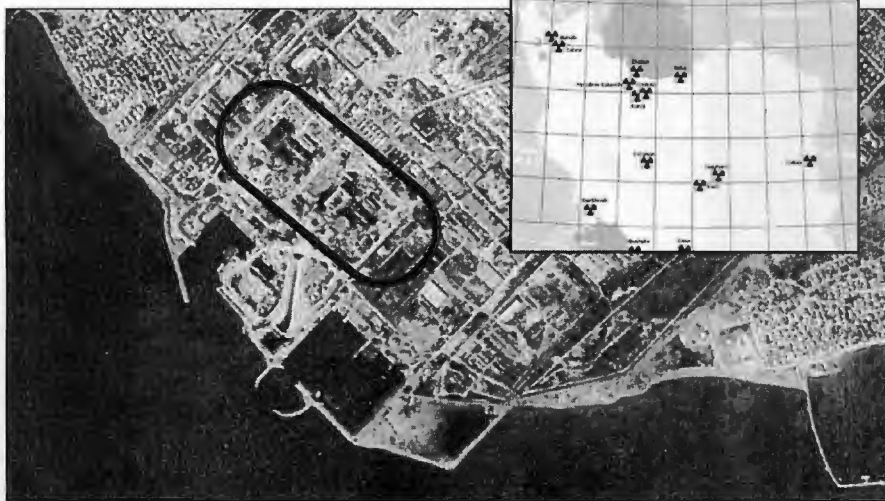
In an assessment of Iran's nuclear weapons program, David Albright, President of Washington's Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) reported in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist* that there was no doubt that Iran "had sought, with limited success, to buy nuclear power and research facilities." It had done so from many countries, he added, including China and Russia. Albright argued that while acquiring such facilities was permitted under the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), they could bring Tehran "significantly closer to a nuclear weapons capability and provide cover for secret, illegal procurement activities in suppli-

er countries.”

He went on: “Iran has shopped quietly in many countries, particularly in Western and Eastern Europe, for a wide range of nuclear-related or ‘dual use’ nuclear items that might enable it to put together facilities to enrich uranium, separate plutonium and make nuclear weapons,” he told *Jane’s*. Albright said that U.S. officials pointed to the manner in which Iran attempted to obtain items needed to manufacture European-style centrifuges.

“Russia has the largest uranium-enrichment centrifuge program in the world. Iran’s attempt to buy a plant from Russia has alerted many Western governments of the possibility that Iran might covertly seek out centrifuge assistance from Russian companies and experts, many of whom are desperate for business and may be willing to evade weakly enforced national export-control laws. Because Russian centrifuges are subcritical models that are relatively unsophisticated (compared to the most modern European machines) they may be easier for Iran to develop and manufacture. In addition, Russia built large numbers of them, raising the possibility that Tehran could somehow acquire large numbers of surplus machines,” said Albright.

Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service



Map Courtesy Federation of American Scientists

*Iran’s interest in things nuclear is not a passing fancy: This map (inset) locates some 14 known nuclear establishments. Bushehr (in circle) is a virtual nuclear city.*

had confirmed much of this activity. It equated Tehran’s activity to the strategy employed earlier by Pakistan and Iraq as they pursued their respective weapons programs, said Albright.

Meanwhile, there have been two major weapons-related issues involving Russia in recent months. The first came late November when Moscow notified Washington that it intended to unilaterally abrogate a 1995 agreement, negotiated by former Vice President Gore, limiting arms sales to Iran. Curiously, the agreement was one of the platforms on which Gore campaigned for the presidency.

### A Better Deal

Mr. Gore reached a confidential deal with Victor Chernomyrdin, then Russian prime minister, to exempt Russia from sanctions for selling weapons to Iran in exchange for Moscow’s pledge that it would end all deliveries of sophisticated arms to Tehran by the end of last year. Having already violated the 1999 deadline, Russia claimed that it needed more time to complete deliveries for a variety

*Continued on page 88*

## IRAN’S SHAHAB-3

According to the *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* Iran’s second test of the Shahab-3 intermediate-range ballistic missile in mid-2000 brought the country a step closer to developing a viable strategic threat, not only to Israel but to any of several nations in the Middle East that lean towards Western interests.

Derived from North Korea’s Nodong-1 surface-to-surface missile, the Shahab-3 is a single-stage intermediate-range ballistic missile powered by liquid fuel. Measuring 17m. it has a range of 1,300kms. and can carry a warhead weighing up to 800 kgs. at about 7,000 kph.

Both the launch site and target destination of last July’s launch were within Iranian territory. Unlike a previous test two years before, this one did not explode shortly after being fired.

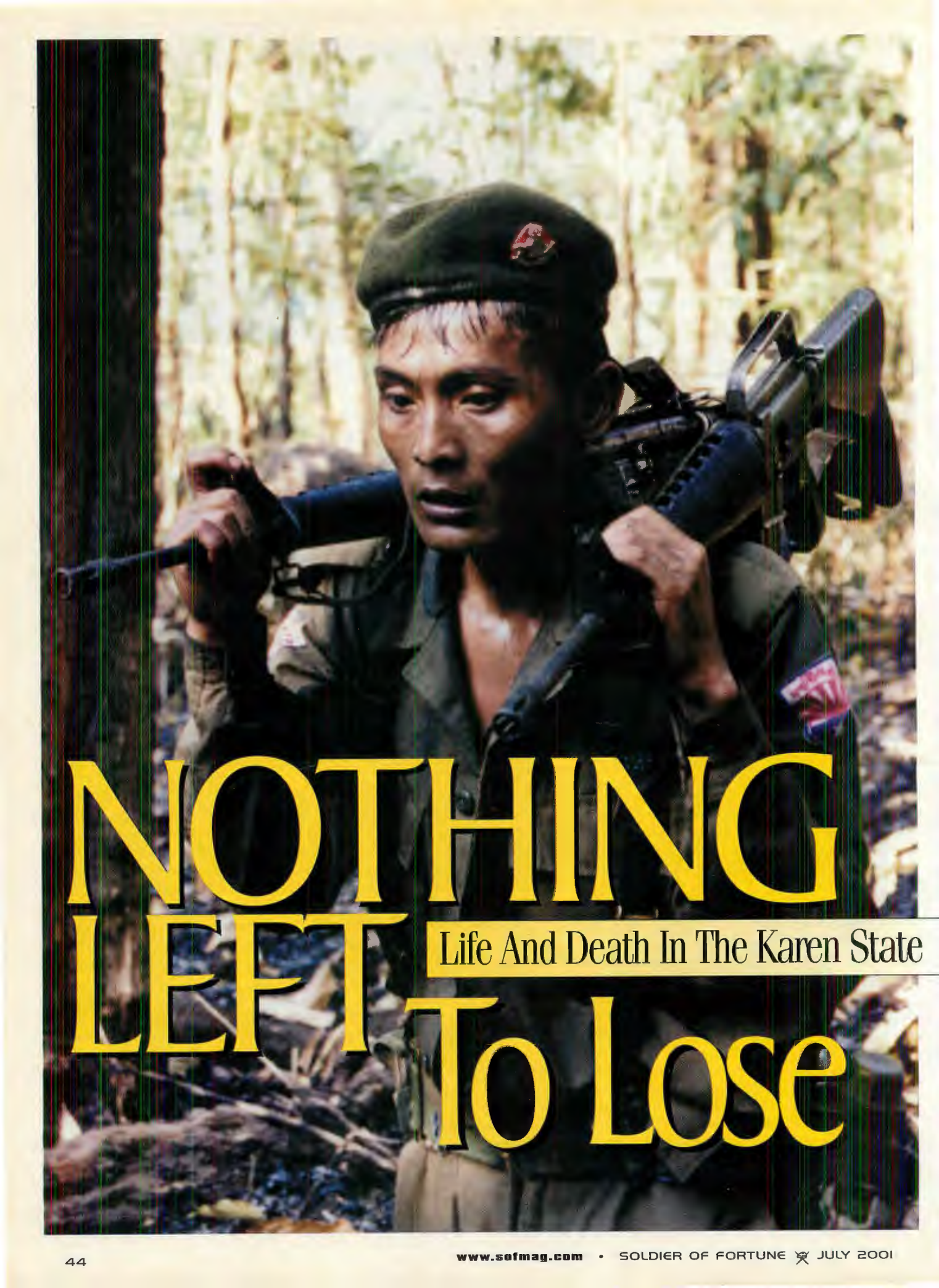
Iran provides no information about any of its WMD programs. Consequently, it is not clear how many of the missiles Tehran intends to build. What has been disclosed is that there are five additional prototypes, some of the latter versions incorporating a Russian power source and technology. It is also known that with foreign help, Iran had been adept at reverse engineering many of the imported components and developing its own indigenously produced replicas.

One school of thought believes the Shahab-3 to be an

interim measure and that all focus will now be on the Shahab-4 with its 2,000km range and larger payload capacity. Unlike its predecessor, the Shahab-4 is the product of exclusively Russian ballistic-missile technology. Also, it can mount nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, though ostensibly, its purpose is to launch Iranian satellites into orbit. Its development is expected to be completed within two or three years. Western experts maintain that at this pace, Tehran will have developed the long-range Shahab-5 ICBM that is regarded as capable of hitting the United States by the end of the decade.

Israel has been disdainful of the Shahab-3, saying that it is of negligible value as a conventional weapon. “It is incapable of striking military targets with any precision,” said Ephraim Sneh, Israel’s Deputy Defense Minister. He argued that “as a state that Iran declares is the devil and must be eradicated from the world, we (Israelis) cannot be apathetic ... we have to go up one, two or even three levels in our defense abilities.”

In reply, U.S. National Security Council spokesperson P. J. Crowley declared that the last Shahab-3 test “underscores the proliferation concerns that we have in the region. If we are ultimately able to achieve an official dialogue with Iran, this is an area that we want to talk to them about.” — A.V.



# NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

Life And Death In The Karen State

It

is 1230 and the guerrilla in charge of detonating the Claymore is asleep. Other soldiers are restless and have moved out of their cover into more comfortable but vulnerable positions. Some of them are talking to each other ignoring their original rule of silence. This is their third attempt in four days to ambush a column of Burmese troops that are believed to be coming down the mountain, and hopefully, for the guerrillas of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), straight into their range of fire and blast from the Claymore. But so far there is no sign of the enemy. "We have to be patient," explains one of the guerrillas. "This is like a giant game of hide-and-seek — only not the kind that kids play."

This giant game of hide and seek has been played out in the jungles of eastern Burma for the last 52 years, one of the longest and least-known conflicts in the world. The Karen are the largest ethnic group in Southeast Asia without a state of their own, but certainly not because they haven't tried. They have been at war for over half-a-century fighting for freedom, independence, and survival from persecution. "We have nothing, we are materialless," says Lieutenant Colonel Gee Gi, an intelligence officer in the KNLA who has spent his life in the jungle resisting the Burmese, "but we have to fight for our freedom — we have to fight for our life."

On this particular day, the column of Burmese soldiers do not come down the mountain into the Karen's ambush. Whether it was coincidence, instinct, or a decision based on information, the choice of the Burmese not to come down the mountain that day saved them from a brutal exit out of life. In the late afternoon, the guerrillas leave the area and return to their makeshift jungle camp a few kilometers up the mountain. On the way, they pick a few wild plants that they will cook for dinner along with rice and chilies.

Food is scarce, and most of what they do eat comes from the jungle in which they live, fight, and die. When the guerrillas are not fighting, they are searching for food: Fish are caught in the nearby rivers using bamboo spears and homemade nets, fruits and nuts are picked off of trees that they climb with ease, and they spend just as much time hunting for animals as they do hunting the enemy. Even when they are out on a patrol or an operation, they will stop to hunt down an animal if they see one. They are warriors on and off the battlefield and any prey that they stalk, whether animal or human, has little chance of escaping them alive. The jungle is their home, their provider of food, and their territory that they defend with their lives.

### Two Weeks Of Preying

After two weeks of stalking the enemy column and failing to lure them into an ambush, the guerrillas give up on the prospect of surprising them and blowing them away with their meager arsenal of military hardware that includes

World War Two rifles and homemade mines. "The enemy is being careful," says the Company Commander shaking his head in disappointment, like he has been cheated out of something that he was suppose to have. "We will have to wait for a better time."

Truly annoyed that he couldn't ambush the enemy column, the Commander opts to fire three RPG rounds into a Burmese battalion outpost. He takes nine of his men and gets two of them to spray machine-gun fire at the outpost while he blasts off the three rounds from his Chinese-made rocket launcher. Another soldier screams out to the five Burmese soldiers that were manning the outpost and now running for their lives. There is no return fire and the 10 Karen guerrillas calmly walk away and retreat into the jungle where they remake an old camp to sleep in for the night. They celebrate their harassment behind enemy lines with a bottle of rum bought with underground connections from the nearby Burmese town. The Commander is happy now, more from the



*Karen villagers living in the jungle after fleeing their homes just ahead of an offensive by the Burmese Army. (opposite) A Karen guerrilla humps back to camp following the ambush, exhausted and carrying an extra M16 which belonged to one of his WIA comrades.*

RPG attack on the outpost than from the rum, but like an alcoholic who takes one small first shot, all he wants is another bigger one.

Lacking men, weapons, equipment, supplies, and everything else that modern armies have, a major attack is out of the question for the company at this time. Since the one Burmese column in the area still remains an unlikely target, the Commander plans another operation. He decides to forget about the Burmese for the time being and hit the KNLA's other enemy: the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) — a factionalist group of the Karen who split away from the Christian-dominated Karen Army six years ago and have



*Karen Gs on the move. When you've nothing left to lose, all you can do is keep pushing forward.*

sided with the Burmese military. In tragic style, the Karen have turned on themselves making their struggle all the more difficult and complicated. Rhyme and reason do not exist in the Karen's jungle, perhaps 53 years of war and persecution has had something to do with this.

The Commander separates his men into three groups. The first group will attack a nearby DKBA compound believed to be holding eight soldiers. The compound is 2 kilometers away from the bottom of the mountain and the beginning of the Burmese lowlands. The attack on this compound should trigger DKBA reinforcements to come from a nearby base in the lowlands — and directly into an ambush set by the second KNLA group. A third group will set up another ambush on another possible route that reinforcements may come along. The Commander is 100 percent confident that his plan will work — and that all three groups of his men will have a fight the next day.

The second group has the only two Claymore mines that the company possess.



*A KIA is littered from the contact scene. Sophisticated medical help is not available.*

They are set up at 0430 along a dirt road that a DKBA reinforcement group would have to follow to get from their base to the compound under attack. The guerrillas take their positions alongside the road in the darkness before first light. Some of them fall asleep again, but this time not the Claymore detonators.

### **Chaos!**

It all happens so fast. One Claymore blast shatters the earth, the other doesn't detonate, bursts of machine-gun fire scream by, a single RPG round hits the road, grenades are launched; there is yelling, screaming, and confusion. And then comes the eerie silence that follows any battle, like the calmness after a storm; a silence that deafens your ears more than any round.

The Karen guerrillas storm the road, which is now just as empty as it was at 0430. The eight DKBA troops that walked into the ambush have fled the road, three of them badly wounded from taking the bulk of the Claymore blast, but not dead — yet. Suddenly the Karen soldiers hit the ground as the sound of an incoming M79 round screams towards them, shattering the silence. The guerrillas run off the road and back into the forest and their avenue of escape to avoid a possible counterattack from other enemy troops in the area. Three of them can't run though due to the M79 fragments imbedded in their bodies.

In the following confusion, one guerrilla stops running, throws off his equipment, and without hesitation runs back towards the road. Two minutes later he reappears again with one of the wounded on his back. Most armies in the world would have given him a medal for his bravery; in the KNLA, he is just doing his duty.

After running for a few minutes to get out of immediate danger, the soldiers stop and treat the three wounded. A bamboo tree is cut down in a matter of seconds and a hammock is tied to it to make a stretcher for the one badly wounded guerrilla who took four grenade fragments in his leg, back, and side.

With incoming mortar fire to deal with, the group begins its climb up the mountain to their jungle camp a few hours away. After the initial ascent up the mountain, the wounded guerrilla being carried insists that he walks on his own. With four body wounds, he gets out of the hammock and limps slowly and painfully up the jungle mountain, at times crawling on his hands and knees. It is a display of raw determination, and if determination could kill an enemy like bullets, then the entire Burmese and DKBA armies would have been wiped out that day.

The operation left six dead DKBA soldiers. The three wounded in the initial Claymore blast didn't survive their wounds and the third KNLA group killed three other DKBA soldiers in a separate ambush. The first group that was sent to attack the DKBA compound found it empty: the soldiers having left it the night before to sleep in the nearby town. But fortune wasn't with them and leaving their compound the night before didn't save them — they were the eight who walked into the Karen's ambush.

### **Born To Die**

With their operation now completed, the company rests for a day before beginning the three-day walk back to their headquarters. There is no relief for the wounded and they have no other choice but to walk back despite their injuries. "It doesn't matter," says one soldier trying to explain



*Waiting for the enemy, early 2001. The war hasn't changed much in half-a-century.*

*The company commander, Second Lieutenant Mint Myintoo, fires an RPG round at a Burmese battalion outpost.*

why the wounded are laughing and smiling as they struggle to walk. "They are born to die."

Headquarters is not the same as it was when they left it a month ago. The soldiers return to an abandoned and deserted village — devoid of people except for the lone figure of a man

and his rifle. Guerrillas don't come anymore hardcore than this man who has been guarding the village for over two weeks with two battalions of Burmese troops descending on the area. The villagers have fled in fear and are hiding in the jungle, knowing that the Burmese do not discriminate

between civilians and combatants. "The Burmese military clears Karen villages with bullets," says Lieutenant Colonel Gee Gi, the aging intelligence officer. He tells a harrowing tale of how in one month 70 Karen villagers were killed in an operation to rid an area of Karen insurgents. "They killed one man, decapitated him, and put his head on the road with a cigarette in his mouth to scare the other villagers. That month, 70 villagers were found dead, floating in the nearby river."

Like the 70 that month, the stories of the Karen people are dying to be told. The guerrillas continue their 53rd year of war with unwavering spirits and unquestionable patriotism that rings louder the guns they fight with. Over 5,000 villagers are hiding in the Karen jungle and dare not return to their village in fear of the Burmese military.

Some children have never known what it is like to live in a home — they



*A wounded G rests: three sizable grenade fragments weren't enough to dampen his spirits. (right) 26-year-old Ku Kwa carries a wounded buddy to safety. Sophisticated medical treatment is a luxury — one which entails an hours-long journey to neighboring Thailand. Many don't make it.*

*Continued on page 83*



# KING RAT

## IN COLOMBIA

### Mysterious Case Of U.S. Colonel Turned Drug Runner

BY CARSON NIGHTWINE, JR.  
PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

“Know Ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of ...” and so the U.S. military promotion decree proclaims. Every soldier knows the weight of these words, especially the new Secretary of State, General Colin Powell.

These are powerful words that possess great depth and meaning to those who serve their country in the armed forces. These special words mean that your country entrusts you with the sacred responsibility to lead its sons and daughters into harm’s way. As Gen. Powell knows, it is complete and it is uncompromising. Those who take the oath are bound by it, even into the face of sure death.

Some day the real story of what happened within

the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia will be told. But for now, the truth will follow Colonel James C. Hiatt, Special Forces, to prison. It will also accompany his wife, “Laurie,” to a federal lock-up for a period of five years.

You see, the colonel’s wife exported close to a million dollars worth of cocaine and heroin from Colombia into the United States and the colonel knew about it and helped launder the hefty proceeds. All the while, Colombian cops were getting killed trying to stop the tidal wave of illegal drugs coming to America.

That’s right, a drug cartel, operating out of the U.S. Embassy in Colombia — and no one has heard much about it. Why, you may ask? Because the Clinton administration didn’t allow it to be an issue and the



*(above) Another drug lab goes up in smoke under the watchful eye of young anti-narcotics policeman of the "DANTI." Narcoguerrillas fight viciously to protect these cocaine labs. If they don't, their drug lord bosses will execute them.*

*(right) Colonel James C. Hiatt (Special Forces), U.S. Army, walks with Major General Alfredo Salgado of the Colombian National Police en route to catching a flight from Bogota to one of the zones of action in the drug war. Today, Major Gen. Salgado would certainly want to slap handcuffs on Col. Hiatt, who is called "the U.S. druglord in uniform" by Colombians.*

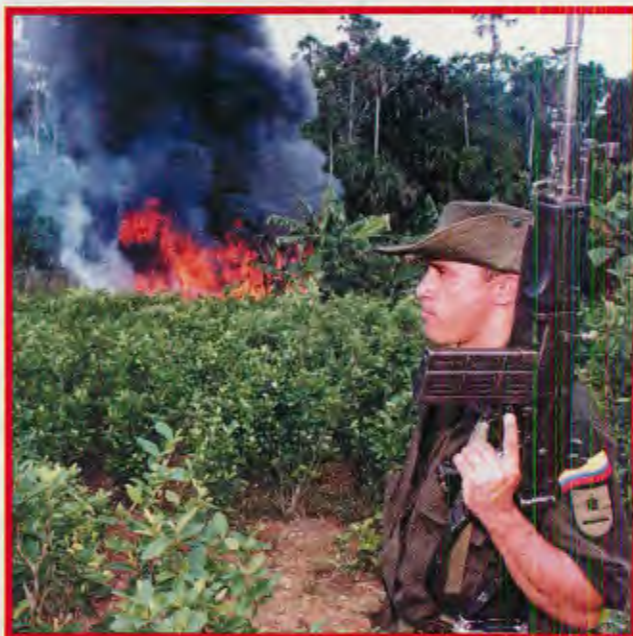


Colombian government didn't release all of its information on the case, fearing they'd lose the \$1.3 billion aid package from the U.S. Congress. The real story is still under wraps and the U.S. State Department doesn't want it to get out. Congressional investigators working for Rep. Bob Barr (R, Ga.) have been looking into the issue for the past year, trying to find out who at the Departments of State and Defense is really in charge on the Colombian issue.

Colonel Hiett was singularly responsible for the most sensitive security operations in the war on drugs in Colombia. He was the one man who knew the top-secret information that the drug cartels needed to know in order to evade U.S. surveillance and interdiction operations. Everyone should be able to figure out that he was a target of the drug lords ... everyone but the State Department folks in the U.S. Embassy.

Hiett commanded the nearly 400 U.S. military personnel serving in Colombia, and it appears by all available evidence that he was "indirectly" on the payroll of the drug cartels. Remember, he took the money, he hid it, and he spent it. He knew where it came from. "If the United States is really involved in a war on drugs and the drug lords are the enemy ... then didn't Colonel Hiett commit treason?" says Bill Corson, a retired Marine colonel and authority on intelligence and counterinsurgency operations.

"Now, let's think about how Colombia has become



*This high-risk drug lab takedown is typical of the operations conducted by Colombian National Police every day. (below) Bodies of Colombian national policemen are moved by Black Hawk helicopter from remote police station after FARC attack. Since 1990, over 5,000 policemen have been killed in the line of duty fighting the war on drugs in Colombia. These men died while Col. Hiett was paying his bills with his wife's drug money.*



the third largest recipient of United States taxpayers' dollars, drawing us into a 37-year-old civil war. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that U.S. anti-drug operations were penetrated by the intelligence apparatus of the drug lords and the narcoguerrillas," continued Corson. Most U.S. intelligence authorities say the failure of interdiction operations certainly could be attributed to the drug lords tapping into the U.S. Embassy; however, until a full assessment is presented, no one but the narcos will know for sure. The crash of a super-secret RC-7 intelligence aircraft, where five U.S. Army and two Colombians were killed, has widely been rumored to have been shot down by the narcos. Could Col. Hiatt have, in some way, compromised information on the RC-7 flight? The families of the soldiers and Colombians who died certainly think so.

Colonel Corson contends that the Clinton administration wanted this "little problem to go away ... and it has." However, congressional hearings by Mr. Clinton's main nemesis, House Government Reform and Oversight Committee Chairman Dan Burton (R, Ind.), along with Congressman Barr, are scheduled to investigate the Colombia issue and the Hiatt case will be looked into very closely. Since 1995, Burton has been a strong critic of Clinton's foreign policy with regard to Colombia and narcotics trafficking.

"The facts are stranger than fiction and it seems the U.S. State Department doesn't want the subject to come up, in any way, shape or form. The State Department has a lot of questions to answer. Today, they are in damage-control mode," says Corson. Obviously, the new Secretary of State, Colin Powell, will be looking to repair the crippled agency.

When looking at the Hiatt case, consider these facts:

- Colonel Hiatt was specifically selected and screened by the Departments of State and Defense before he was chosen to assume command of the U.S. Military Group in Colombia. He was approved through this rigorous vetting process. However, the results of that process have not been made public despite numerous requests by the press. Is there something to hide?

- The U.S. Embassy, according to the *Washington Post*, was investigating between six and eight employees, and their families for using the U.S. Army postal system to ship drugs. The investigation report has never been made public and according to the Colombian press, the issue was "covered up" by the U.S. Ambassador and the State Department.

- According to some U.S. Marine security guards at the Bogota Embassy, the investigation was "short-circuited" when the names of senior foreign service officers and their

family members started showing up in interviews as having knowledge of drug use and drug trafficking within the embassy.

- The initial U.S. Army investigation "cleared" Col. Hiatt when the story first hit the press. Upon further examination by the FBI, DEA and the U.S. Postal Service investigators, the evidence showed Col. Hiatt's complicity and knowledge of the criminal enterprise. This is a business that may have been much larger than ever revealed.

- Since this obviously embarrassing scandal was exposed in 1999, both the senior Navy and Marine Corps officers stationed at the U.S. Military Group in Bogota, were "relieved of duties" for cause and both have reportedly "left the service prematurely."

"All these facts seem to add up to a very disturbing situation with regard to the U.S. military's role in the war on drugs, especially when the number of U.S. military personnel in Colombia will soon triple," says Robert W. Johnson, a Washington, D.C.-based authority on terrorism and low-intensity conflicts. "It appears that our servicemen and women sent to

Colombia will be facing a greater threat today than ever before," he continues. It goes without saying that this is due in large part to the strength and growing military capabilities of the 25,000 FARC and ELN narco-guerrillas who now control over 60% of Colombia.

When terms "special trust and confidence" are used, let's remember Col. Hiatt and the nearly 600 State Department employees in Colombia. We should also remember all the senior officers and diplomats who sold-out a generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in Vietnam three decades ago. General Colin Powell knows that the term "soldier of misfortune" could apply as well to all those who serve under such people. "Remember that special trust and confidence will be tested ... time and again in U.S. relations with Colombia," contends Robert Johnson. He no doubt will be proven correct.

*Carson A. Nightwine, Jr., is a former U.S. Congressional investigator for the House Government Reform and Oversight's subcommittee on Criminal Justice and Drug Policy. He recently returned from a fact-finding mission to Colombia.* ✕



**A DANTE strike package getting ready to launch on a big anti-narcotics mission in southeastern Colombia. This fleet of ancient Vietnam War-era UH-1H helicopters prepare for a direct action mission. Note U.S. military and civilian advisors.**

# A Day At The Range



## Olympic Arms PCR-5

BY DICK CULVER

**MY** first glimpse of Olympic Arms came just as dawn broke on the back woods of Washington State. Gloria and I had been driving the better part of the night to make Oly Arms' "Day at the Range." A previous fire had caused considerable damage and Olympic was throwing a "bash" to demonstrate that all was back in battery and business was progressing as usual. Since it was still "O'dark thirty" when we arrived, the only one to beat us to the plant was the faithful company pooch, "Cindy." Since we had a couple of hours to wait, we decided to find an all-night eatery. A pot of coffee and some well-cooked bacon, eggs and toast put us back on the road.

Our "second coming" was a real revelation! The place was packed and it was only 0800. More cars were coming into the parking lot as we secured the truck — this was obviously gonna be a full day, punctuated by free firing and a barbecue. By the time the day's participants had arrived, the crowd had expanded to approximately 350 firearms' enthusiasts. Since the expected participation had been about 150, the tour of



*Olympic Arms' faithful company pooch, Cindy, beat us to the plant for a day of shooting.*

the plant was divided up into three groups each with their own guide. While I had done business with Safari Arms for a number of years on pistol parts and owned a Detonics .45, I had never seen their AR line of rifles. I was looking forward to the tour. I was amazed to find that, unlike other manufacturers of AR-style rifles, Olympic produced all their own barrels, for both their rifles and pistols. While their claims of measured excellence sounded good, I wasn't to find out just how good until somewhat later.

Following the tour of the plant where we got to see all phases of manufacture, we departed for the Evergreen Range.

This is a first-class shooting facility complete with every sort of range from pistol shooting facilities to shotgun ranges. The entire facility is equipped with a plush clubhouse complete with cafeteria.

The first order of business was to repair to the range and form a large ring around a wooden table. As part of the day's activities, a special stripped AR15 receiver had been engraved to commemorate the "2000 Olympic Arms Day at the Range." A large box of parts had been selected at ran-

dom from the parts bins at the factory and were to be assembled on the engraved receiver while everyone watched. The rifle went together as slick as clockwork and we were soon looking at a completed PCR -5 (PCR incidentally stands for *Politically Correct Rifle*). This particular version had the 16-inch button-rifled barrel and was a cute as a bug's fanny. This rifle (along with a sample of all of their current offerings) went from the rifle assembly area to the various points on the range.

The weapons were set out on the benches in a line so that you could start at point "A," fire your test group, and move to point "B." This would continue until everyone had gotten to shoot each rifle. A quick break for a wonderful barbecue broke the almost continuous firing and gave everyone a chance to palaver with their neighbor. The marathon shoot continued until everyone had shot all the available variations and we went back to the rifle assembly area where the little Oly Arms AR15 had been put together from individual parts.

At this point, the nice Oly Arms crew announced that they were going to be selling raffle tickets for the little commemorative rifle they had assembled as a demonstration. Now this was a cute little rifle, and I had begun to get a case of the "gotta haves"... Gloria wasn't going to be happy with my plans for the family budget! The tickets were in the form of a theater-roll with every purchaser getting two tickets for a five-dollar bill, one of which you were to keep, and another that you put in the large can for the drawing. Gloria sprung for a \$20 dollar bill, buying four tickets, and I went back up to talk to some to the old-timers working for Olympic (never having won anything in my life, I wasn't worried about the outcome of the drawing).



*As part of the day's activities, a special stripped AR15 receiver had been engraved to commemorate the "2000 Olympic Arms Day at the Range."*

### And The Winner Is ...

The time for the drawing was announced and I headed back for the main area. I arrived just in time to find that Gloria had won a subscription to *Shotgun News*, and that they were just a-fixin' to draw for the rifle. Since both Gloria and I were about half-asleep, having driven all night, I wasn't paying much attention. A loud *Whoop* beside me brought me out of my stupor. Gloria was waving her ticket in the air saying something clever like "I won, I won!"... Hummm ... I was sure that it must have been a mistake, and her sleep-blurred eyes had misread the ticket, I sat in a bemused silence. She went to the drawing official, and my gawd, she had won the little beast! *Gesssh*, this could prove embarrassing. As the cap

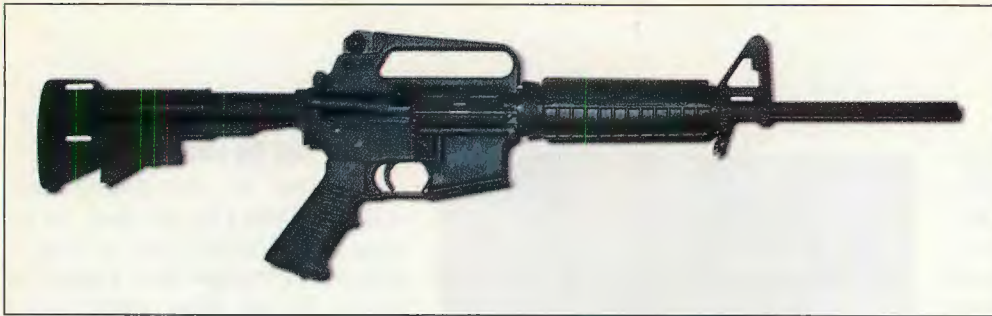
to a fun-filled day, we got a motel room in the interest of highway safety and departed the next day for home.

Being fascinated with the little rifle, Gloria was pushing for a trip to the range where we could test her prize. Things became busy, the weather uncooperative and suddenly it was time to head for the Soldier Of Fortune Convention. While manning the sniper booth, Gloria kept disappearing from time to time, taking her little rifle with her. When she finally showed up, she had a rifle that bore little resemblance to the small lightweight rifle she had brought with us. When she brought it back to the table, it now had a 16" heavy stainless steel barrel with a flat-topped top end. The circular metal hand guard was heavily checkered and had a stud attached for affixing a Harris Bipod. Next, she'd been over dickering with U.S. Optics folks who had a booth immediately behind the sniper booth. Ultimately, she had a scope to top off her newly acquired toy, and the final assembly made an extremely handsome package. We could hardly wait to get home to test the small, but businesslike looking, rifle. I attached the new U.S. Optics Scope and an old Harris Bi-Pod that I had



*The CAR97, which is essentially the FAR using the heavier barrel, now can be ordered in the CAR97C configuration which comes with a "Shadow Grass" camouflage pattern.*





Since our trip to the range, Olympic has come out with some new offerings including a lightweight rifle called the FAR15 which stands for the Featherweight AR15 that weighs in complete at 4.92 lbs.



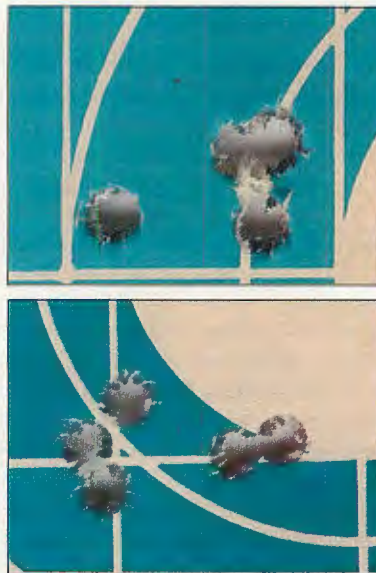
put away 20-years before.

An exceptionally nasty winter kept us indoors for a period of months, and we were both itching to get the little rifle to the range for testing.

Suddenly dawns the day we'd been waiting for. Bright sunlight, reasonably warm (at least 35 degrees F.) with little wind. We threw the rifle, spotting scope and ammunition in the truck and headed for the range. The new upper end Gloria had traded for had a 16-inch stainless steel, button rifled barrel with a 1-8 twist. While I have never expected much from a button rifled barrel, I was to be taught a lesson that day! I had acquired some Federal Gold Match 69-grain .223 ammunition from my old Ordnance Chief from Quantico many years ago. He had retired from the Marines and gone down the street to act as the FBI's Sniper Armorer and later became their ballisticsian. He then retired from the FBI, and became the Law Enforcement Sales Representative for Federal Cartridge. I figured that Ted would have the inside scoop for the best load for this little cutie. Ted recommended the 69-grain Federal Gold Match Load, and I must say his insight was right on the money.

I cleaned the barrel thoroughly and ran about five rounds downrange prior to firing for group. Cleaning the barrel once more, and drying the tube thoroughly, I fired one more fouling shot. We collimated the scope and Gloria got into position behind the rifle. It took about three five-shot groups to get the groups centered but the initial efforts showed promise.

The following targets were done in spite of the trigger that came on the gun. It was not meant as a match rifle, but assembled from a box of parts as a demonstration of the universal assembly of parts. While the trigger could hardly be



(top) 69 gr. Federal Gold Metal  
(bottom) 73 gr. Black Hills

described as a match trigger, it was controllable if you were an experienced rifle shot. Gloria had been broken in by her brother when she was nine, and the rifle was a .270 Winchester. She mastered the .270 even though she had to scoot back into firing position between shots. The long and spongy AR15 trigger proved to be no obstacle to her shooting, although it would be interesting to see what she could do with a clean breaking trigger.

### On Target

The target was placed at 100-yards and the firing began. I watched with fascination through my old scope and, at first, I was convinced that something had gone wrong. Several shots into the string showed me the error of my judgment. A tight group began to manifest itself on the target. The entire exercise demonstrated that the short 16" button rifled SS barrel with a 1-8 twist was up to the job at hand! We fired both the Federal Gold Medal 69-grain Sierra Match King BTHP and some Black Hills 73-grain loads. Considering that no concerted effort had been made to break in the barrel, I was amazed. The largest group was with the Black Hills 73-grain BTHP load, nothing exceeding 3/4" by 1/4" and the Federal shot time after time into a nice 3/4" group. The 3/4" Federal group was measured with one flyer. If the flyer had not been there, the group would have measured a very tight 1/4" group! That's some shooting with an essentially new barrel! I was convinced that this little rifle had great promise! I suspect that the next acquisition for the diminutive varmint rifle will have to be a first class trigger job. Incidentally, Olympic puts a very nice match trigger configuration on their target guns.

Since our trip to the range, Olympic has come out with some new offerings including a lightweight rifle called the



*(above) The weapons were set out on the benches in a line so that you could start at point "A," fire your test group, and move to point "B." This would continue until everyone had gotten to shoot each rifle. (right) Being fascinated with the little rifle, Gloria was pushing for a trip to the range where we could test her prize.*

FAR15 which stands for the Featherweight AR15 that weighs in complete at 4.92 lbs. This rifle is all metal using no carbon fiber parts and uses the standard A2 sights, a AR15 A1 contour barrel and a fixed collapsible style stock (thanks, Slick Willie!). The CAR97, which is essentially the FAR using the heavier barrel, now can be ordered in the CAR97C configuration which comes with a "Shadow Grass" camouflage pattern.

My personal favorite is the DCM/CMP legal Service Match Rifle that comes equipped as follows, from the description on the Olympic Arms website:

*The best DCM/CMP legal competition rifle available from any manufacturer today! Right out of the box and onto the firing line, this rifle offers some of the latest in competition technologies. The ServiceMatch starts with our world-famous Ultramatch barrel — the same as on our PCR-1. We also add 1/4 MOA adjustable NM rear sights, a factory tuned 4.5# trigger job, hand matched receivers, and a DCM legal free-floating handguard that incorporates the sling swivel attachment.*

*Features include:*

*Broach-cut 416 stainless steel heavy barrel, 20" OAL, 1x10" twist Service Match free floating handguard 4.5 lb. crisp trigger pull Weight: 9 lbs Length: 39 1/2" MSRP \$1,062.00*

The DCM Match Rifle is a real bargain considering that it comes with a lifetime warranty and guaranteed minute of angle accuracy out of the box! You get this rifle for the same price advertised as the dealer's price for the ArmaLite DCM Rifle of essentially the same specifications. If it's nearly as sweet to shoot as Gloria's little rifle, it ought to be a real "jim-dandy."

Olympic Arms truly offers your heart's desire, made to your specifications in virtually any configuration you desire so long as it does not violate current federal restrictions (Remember that PCR stands for Politically Correct — a tongue-in-cheek reference to the fact that the government is currently hung-up on meaningless restrictions on flash hiders, and pistol grips). Sigh ... Ah well, rest assured that you will be more than satisfied with your Oly Heart's Desire. Truly, you can have a customized rifle for a very reasonable price. I can't say enough about Olympic's barrels! I can hardly wait to try one of their broached barrels. Now if a button rifled 16" barrel will shoot sub-minute of angle groups with fewer than 100-rounds through it, what will a cut rifled barrel do?

There is one accessory that I am honor bound to try, and that is an upper receiver in .45 ACP caliber using a modified UZI Magazine and standard A2 sights. The current going tariff for a complete upper is \$595. It's so popular that they are always on back order. If you have the same urge that I have, you'd better get in line. ☒

## CONTACT SHEET

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**U.S. Optics, Dept. SOF**  
5900 Dale St., Buena Park, CA 90621  
phone: 714-994-4901; website: www.usoptics.com

**Black Hills Ammunition, Dept. SOF**  
PO Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709  
phone: 605-348-5150

**Federal Cartridge Company — Blount, Inc., Dept. SOF**  
900 Ehlen Drive, Anoka, MN 55303  
phone: 612-323-2300; website: www.federalcartridge.com



**BY** mid-1968, at the height of the Vietnam War, all the field rats of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division had seen their share of airmobile operations. Since our intelligence was usually scarce to nonexistent, we spent a lot of time conducting blind insertions into any unexplored patch of vegetation that might serve as concealment for a Viet Cong unit. We often felt we were simply used as bait, cast out into a likely area to see if the VC would bite. Rather than worms, though, we were more like sea snakes, since we were lethal on anything our size or smaller. All the senior officers in the 9<sup>th</sup> were great guys, especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, but none had ever really fought a Vietnam-type war on the ground, and had no real appreciation of the difficulties we encountered in the wet/dry rice paddies, mangrove swamps, primary/secondary jungle, banana groves, rubber plantations, Plain of Reeds — or unfriendly villages, where you had to deal with cobras and kraits, snipers and booby traps, ambushes and skirmishes, as well as all the enemy units wandering around — some in regimental strength. Anyway, toward the end of May, my old outfit, C/2-39 Infantry, hit a toll-collection point, whacked one Dink, then was ordered to pursue two others who had escaped into a banana grove, which was the absolute worst terrain of all the bad terrain in Vietnam. The Battalion Commander harassed us from the C&C helicopter until we finally



# Rescue!

## When Every Man Steps Forward **PART II**

**BY COL. MIKE PECK  
(RET.)**

PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

stumbled across an 80-year-old dude toking a joint, stoned totally out of his gourd. I radioed the C&C, telling them that we had just “captured” what was “almost certainly” a VC regimental commander, which ended the operation, since we had to walk out of the grove to evac our prize. The entire drill was sort of typical of what we went through day after day, but the purpose

of this anecdote was simply to highlight some of the many reasons that no one ever volunteered for an air assault. The only exception to that basic rule occurred later that same day.

### **Back To Base**

We got back to Firebase Moore just in time for noon chow. The first order of business, though, was a leech check,



*(above) Prior to lift-off to our mobile-assault's LZ. Every operation resulted in a gut-churning adrenaline rush. (inset) Unassing was often a snap. Other times, though, the choppers would hover 2 - 3 feet off the LZ and we'd hop off — into knee-deep mud.*

and, sure enough, everyone was covered with them. You could either burn them off with a cigarette, squirt some G.I. insect repellent on them, or "dust" them with salt from the C-Rat accessory packs to make them shrivel up and drop off. They left an odd three-sided bite mark that would always bleed a long time after they were gone, because of the anti-coagulant they injected into the incision. God, I hated those things!

After a gourmet repast of warmed-up C-Rations, complemented by a vintage red ("room-temperature" grape Kool-Aid), I went back to my Company CP to make sure everyone was busy pulling maintenance on their feet and weapons. Trenchfoot was a real problem because of all the water and mud, which was also the mortal enemy of the maintenance-intensive M16. That is why I liked the MP40, which operated from the open-bolt position; you could wallow around in the mud with it, then

I turned to look. It was Frank Till, the Battalion S-2 (Intel Officer).

He came close enough to yell, "Hey, Mike, heads-up! Briefing in the TOC in five minutes!" He then turned and hurried back to the Battalion Command Post, a large bunker made of heavy timbers and sandbags. The TOC (tactical operations center) was located within this structure.

"I do believe we're about to land in the shit again!" was the astute observation of Lieutenant Garcia, my artillery FO (forward observer). "You don't really think that old coot was a VC, do you?"

"Be our luck," I said, pulling on my boots (minus socks, which I never wore). "I'd give a month's pay to get that whole battalion rat pack down in one of those banana groves for a couple of hours. Everything always looks so easy from 1,500 feet." We often went out again in the afternoon, but something about Frank's demeanor made

everyone uneasy.

When I arrived at the TOC there was none of the normal ragging and bullshit that normally went on. With no prologue, Colonel Leggett stepped to the front to announce, "Mike, we think we have a fix on a POW holding area. How long will it take for you to get your people ready to go?"

*Bingo! That was the exception!*

For any normal operation I would have cried like a rat eating an onion, sniveling that we had already been out and that it was someone else's turn. Not this time, though, I responded without hesitation, "We can be ready to roll in 15 mikes. Let me use the phone." I called my CP on the sound-power line to issue a brief warning order, then returned to hear what had been passed along by the 1st Brigade.

### **Holy Shit! A Goddamn Gas Attack!**

Lieutenant Colonel Leggett continued, "You were picked for this one by Colonel Emerson, himself, because of your Special Forces and Ranger experience. It's not going to be easy." He paused, "Any problems?"

"No problems, Sir," I replied, very sincerely.

He then turned it over to Frank Till, who handled the intel end, surprisingly complete. Frank emphasized, "Higher thinks the agent who brought the information back was compromised and that the VC might move the camp at any time. Normally they would try a clan-



*En route to touch-down. As the choppers made their final approach our doorgunners would open up. You had to pay attention to where you ran after you unassed, or you'd run into their fire. (below) The terrain below looked almost serene. Oftentimes, it was hard to tell that a war was on.*

let a helicopter blow it full of sand and other miscellaneous detritus, but when you pulled the heavy bolt back, "Look out, Charlie!" Once everybody had his weapon apart and was stripped down to soak some rays, we were all hoping that the gang at Battalion would notice — and leave us alone.

Specialist Smedley, my company medic, was making a show of cleaning the wooden rifle I let him carry. For his own personal reasons, he was unwilling to pack a real one, but he was so good that I let him do pretty much as he pleased (which, I guess, I actually did with a lot of the guys). He looked up and said, "Uh, oh, Charlie-6. Trouble. Incoming! Ten o'clock!"





*Sometimes winds would disperse the CN or CS gas; other times it would just hang eerily over a target. I hated trying to maneuver with my gas mask on.*

destine infiltration with a special ops team, but there's no time, and now you're it, buddy."

Frank passed off to Major Rice who outlined the plan, that sounded very much like an air assault into a hot objective, until he paused and added, "To enhance the element of surprise and incapacitate the enemy for at least a few minutes, the area is going to be prepped with powdered CN gas just before you go in."

Holy shit! A goddamn gas attack!

Major Rice went on, "Division is sending out a load of M-17 Protective Masks and spare filters. The filters are probably waterlogged, so make sure your guys check 'em out. You have priority, but send us the ones you don't use. We're going to need some for ourselves and Brigade."

"Seventy will do us. Sixty for us, plus ten for anybody we might police up."

Colonel Legget then stepped up to say, "OK, one other slight twist. S.L.A. Marshal is in Dong Tam at Division Headquarters. He found out about the whole thing and wants to go along,

He'll be aboard the helicopter with Colonel Emerson, and will be taking pictures and conducting interviews. Tell everybody to keep it upbeat. Any problem with that?"

"No problem, Sir."

We all got up to cluster around the map and work out the general details, although exactly how to put the bell on the cat was always up to me. When I assembled my subordinate leaders to outline the overall scheme, their reaction was the same as mine, and everybody perked-up immediately. The suspect camp was located was a little farther to the north and slightly west of our normal area of operations, in a thickly vegetated patch of secondary jungle, through which a sizeable stream flowed. We quickly worked out our own internal plan, sort of street gang fashion, but, as always, the final result was right out the Ranger Handbook: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon would assault the encampment and sweep through to the stream, taking out any male, non-Caucasians they encountered, then secure the far side of the objective; the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon would provide security, moving a squad out to anchor each flank, with the third following behind the assault party to clear the buildings and bunkers; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Herd would then conduct a thorough search of the camp, looking for tunnels

or underground installations, and would be in charge of masking and evacuating any POW's or casualties. Since we had to wait for the masks, the platoon and squad leaders had a chance to thoroughly brief their men and make sketches or sand-table mock-ups.

It was truly amazing, guys who would normally do anything to weasel out of going to the field were out there standing tall and ready to whip ass for a spot on one of the birds, once they found out we were going to go rescue some American prisoners. It was also extraordinary that no one seemed overly concerned that we were going to hit the place wearing gas masks — with no practice or rehearsals. Early on, I had made everyone carry one of the small riot-control masks, along with a canister of CS or CN gas. If we were ever about to get overrun, the plan was to mask everybody up, then try to break out under cover of the tear gas. We had done a few haphazard dry runs, but had never actually popped any gas.

Colonel Emerson and Brigadier General Marshall came in right behind the CH-47, so I had to stop what I was doing to go meet with them. I was still carrying the MP40 along with a Luger pistol in a non-regulation holster,

*Continued on page 84*



## The Year Of The

# Dragon

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### Waking Up to the Reality of the China Threat

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BY BILL GERTZ

PHOTOS: AP/WIDE WORLD

**On** 1 April 2001 over the South China Sea, a U.S. military surveillance aircraft was intercepted by a Chinese J-8 interceptor jet. The mid-air collision that took place that day would change relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States. No longer will China's communist government be viewed as a benign entity. Eight years of illusions fostered by the Clinton administration that China could become a strategic partner of the United States were left on Hainan Island in the South China Sea, where 24 American service members who sought help after an emergency landing were instead held prisoner for 12 days and threatened with an espionage trial and prison.

A U.S. EP-3E Aries II surveillance plane, one of 11 of the U.S. military's most sophisticated tactical intelligence gatherers, was lost to the

People's Liberation Army, a communist military that views the United States as its main enemy and is working diligently to build up its forces for a future confrontation.

The story of the EP-3E began before 1 April. The Chinese military had been stepping up aggressive counter-surveillance and harassment of U.S. surveillance activities for months before the incident. On 24 March in the Yellow Sea near the Korean peninsula, the U.S. ocean surveillance ship *U.S.S. Bowditch* was threatened by a Chinese warship. The Type 53HT, Jianghu III-class frigate *Huangshi* pointed its fire control radar at the *Bowditch* while the U.S. ship was monitoring Chinese submarine exercises in international waters. The Chinese were claiming the U.S. ship was operating in a 200-mile Economic Exclusion Zone that is meant to limit fishing and other natural resource efforts, not surveillance.

"The Chinese ship made aggressive and provocative maneuvers, closing within 600 yards of and pointing gun fire control radar, but not guns, at the U.S. oceanographic survey ship," said a Navy source.

It was the same 200-mile zone that the Chinese government is now claiming as sovereign territory and which led to the EP-3E incident.

That naval encounter was kept secret by the U.S. Pacific Command as part of its efforts to develop relations with the PLA, a policy that angered many officials in Washington who saw the program of exchanges and ship visits as one-sided and more helpful to Chinese intelligence than any effort to bridge differences.

Exactly eight days later, Navy Lieutenant Shane Osborn took off from Kadena Air Base on Okinawa in an EP-3E for what was hoped to be another of the twice-weekly surveillance flights along the Chinese coast.

Intelligence officials described

the tasking list of targets for the surveillance flight as varied and opportunistic. The flight route called for flying some 50 to 70 miles off the Chinese coast gathering anything and everything broadcast over the airwaves — military communications, commercial radio broadcasts and even cell-phone conversations are vacuumed up by the aircraft's sophisticated electronic listening gear.

Chinese military forces had been conducting exercises near the coast north of Taiwan and its communications would be monitored. Another priority target is China's new missile bases opposite Taiwan, where two new bases — at Yongan and Xianyou — recently received trainloads of new CSS-7 short-range ballistic missiles sent from a factory in central China.

The missile buildup is viewed as the most dangerous aspect of Chinese military activity. From a force of less than 50 missiles five years ago, the PLA today has some 300 CSS-7 and CSS-6 missiles pointed at Taiwan. The Pentagon sees the missiles as destabilizing for the simple reason that there is very little defense against them. U.S. military doctrine — known to Taiwanese forces — for dealing with short-range missile threats is simple: Pre-emptive attack. Thus there are growing fears that through miscalculation, a war could break out across the Taiwan Strait. And the United States, under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, has said it would not allow the forcible reunification of Taiwan by the mainland.

Another target of opportunity for Lt. Osborn's mission was to look for any communications between nuclear weapons facilities in eastern China and a nuclear test range at Lop Nor, in remote western Xinjiang province. A week before the surveillance flight, U.S. spy satellites had



*Osborn made an heroic effort to get control of the aircraft. The plane veered left and nearly rolled over as it fell some 8,000 feet. The nose of the plane was sheared off by debris and wires wrapped around the aircraft's tail (below).*





**Wang Wei flew underneath the four-engine EP-3E Aries II aircraft in preparation for a "thump" — a maneuver designed to shake up the surveillance plane by disrupting its flight path with the exhaust of its jet. But he came in too fast and as he tried to slow down, he nosed-up the front of his jet, causing the tail of the J-8 to clip the outermost propeller on the EP-3E's left wing. And then all hell broke loose.**

detected preparations for a small nuclear test, or perhaps a "subcritical" nuclear test, at Lop Nor. U.S. intelligence hoped there might be some communications in the take from the surveillance flight that could shed light on the test, which is part of China's major strategic nuclear forces buildup.

China ended nuclear testing in the 1990s but U.S. intelligence agencies picked up evidence last year that Beijing had a covert nuclear testing program. Chinese nuclear agents in Moscow were detected purchasing special containment equipment used by the Russians to mask their nuclear tests. The tests are believed to be efforts by the Chinese to build small nuclear warheads for their ballistic missiles or to develop multiple warheads.

As the EP-3E approached Hainan Island near the end of the outbound leg of the flight, the crew had been briefed to expect being greeted by Chinese interceptors. They were flying at about 18,000 feet. Hainan is home to two major signals intelligence sites used by the Chinese to monitor communications in the region. The military on the island also is known to be among the more aggressive of the Chinese military commands.

When two F-8 interceptors did make an appearance with

a pass in front of the aircraft, the Chinese pilot was well-known to U.S. intelligence from previous intercepts when he flew within 20 feet of U.S. monitoring aircraft. At one point, Wang Wei held up a piece of paper with his e-mail address.

As in earlier encounters, mounted on the wing of the F-8 was an Israeli-made Python 3, an effective air-to-air missile Israel had been selling to China since the late 1980s, much to the chagrin of the Pentagon.

This time, however, the pilot made a fatal error. He flew underneath the four-engine EP-3E Aries II aircraft in preparation for a "thump" — a maneuver designed to shake up the surveillance plane by disrupting its flight path with the exhaust of its jet. Wang Wei came in too fast and as he tried to slow down, he nosed-up the front of his jet, causing the tail of the J-8 to clip the outermost propeller on the EP-3E's left wing. And then all hell broke loose.

"This guy just killed us," Lt. Osborn said of his first thought after the collision. "The plane just snap-rolled." The aircraft pitched left more than 130 degrees and plunged downward. "I remember seeing waters," Osborn said.

Senior Chief Petty Officer Nicholas Mellos said the scene inside the cockpit was "mayhem" as debris sheared off the nose and damaged a right engine propeller, causing it to go out of balance. The fuselage of the aircraft was penetrated with debris, causing a howling noise as air rushed inside the hull.

The J-8, a Chinese derivative of the MiG-21, broke apart immediately. Wang ejected but his parachute failed to open and he plummeted some 12,000 feet to his death in the South China Sea.

"His vertical stabilizer impacted my No. 1 propeller," Lt.

Osborn said. "His nose hit my nose."

Osborn made an heroic effort to get control of the aircraft. The plane veered left and nearly rolled over as it fell some 8,000 feet. The nose of the plane was sheared off by debris and wires wrapped around the aircraft's tail. Flying the aircraft took all his strength and it was nothing short of a miracle that the crew survived.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Jeffrey Vignery, Osborn's co-pilot, helped pull the plane out of its death dive. "I didn't think we were going to make it. . . . I said another prayer at that time, just in case I didn't get it right the first time," he said.

With belly-protruding radardome and a missing nose cone, the pilot figured the crew had little chance of surviving a ditching but Osborn ordered all 24 crew members to put on parachutes and prepare to bail out.

Once under control, Osborn began shouting Mayday messages over radio band 243. In the cabin, crew members had begun the "destruct procedure" to destroy as much of the surveillance gear as possible. Wielding sledgehammers and axes, the crew got most of the equipment. "The inside of that plane looked like aftermath of a frat party," said one Navy official.

Osborn made the decision to land at Hainan Island's Lingshui airfield, a military base. He circled the field calling for an emergency landing but got no response. Finally he put the aircraft down on the runway and Chinese military troops turned out to greet them.

The crew spent the first two days in detention at a mosquito-infested military barracks at Lingshui and were then moved to a military guest lodge in Haiku. Osborn was separated from the rest of the crew — a violation of the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war, where he was subjected to "self-reflection and interrogations" by the Chinese military.

The questioning took place at all hours of the night and lasted up to five hours at a time. The sessions were video-

taped, as if the PLA was preparing to use them in court. "At first, we didn't know what would happen, if they were going to get physical," Osborn said. "Initially, of course, I felt threatened" but he noted that the crew was not physically abused.

The food included rice and fish heads.

Back in Washington, the initial intelligence reported bad news. Intercepts of Chinese military communications revealed that the Chinese military in Hainan and Beijing were telling top leaders that the entire incident was a deliberate U.S. provocation. The reports stated that the Chinese military were blaming the aircraft for making a sharp left turn — something the lumbering surveillance plane is incapable of doing. The intelligence reports meant that China's communist leaders would not back down and would insist that the incident was the United States fault.

That position became clear two days after the collision. Chinese Defense Minister General Chi Haotian, who two years ago predicted ominously that war between China and the United States is "inevitable," demanded a U.S. apology. "The US should apologize to the Chinese people and take effective measures to avoid another similar matter from happening," said Gen. Chi, who is also Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission, the Communist Party organ that controls the Chinese military.

The Chinese military was firmly in control and saw the incident as an opportunity for forcing the United States to end or curtail its surveillance missions of the Chinese coast.

*The crew spent the first two days in detention at a mosquito-infested military barracks at Lingshui and were then moved to a military guest lodge in Haiku. Osborn was separated from the rest of the crew — a violation of the Geneva convention on prisoners of war, where he was subjected to "self-reflection and interrogations" by the Chinese military.*





That would emerge as a key strategic objective and one that remains in Chinese demands.

The immediate problem for the new Bush administration was getting in touch with the Chinese government. President Bush was staying at the presidential retreat at Camp David in western Maryland when he was informed of the incident by Condoleezza Rice, his national security adviser.

"The problem we had was getting the Chinese's attention," said a senior administration official involved in the crisis. The top priority was to get access to the crew, something the Chinese military at first refused to do.

It was only after China's friends in the United States business community began notifying Beijing that the detention of the Americans was going to have serious economic consequences, that communist leaders in Beijing began to take notice. Secretary of State Colin Powell said the business leaders' calls to Beijing and the cancellation of several congressional delegations were subtle signs to Beijing that time was running out for the Chinese and that damage to the relationship, including possible cancellation of preferable-trading status, could be long-lasting.

Ambassador Joseph Prueher, a retired four-star admiral and former commander of U.S. Pacific Command and viewed by critics as far too soft on the threat posed by China, failed to reach any Defense Ministry officials. He was unable to contact senior foreign ministry officials and was relegated to speaking shortly after the incident began to a junior foreign ministry official.

Despite years of military exchange programs between the Pentagon and the Chinese military, no Chinese military official at any level would talk to any U.S. official, in



*A Chinese military policeman is reflected in the U.S. embassy sign on Tuesday, April 17, 2001, in Beijing. A delegation from the U.S. is expected to arrive today to further discuss the spy plane incident in which both sides have maintained opposing views. (below) Pedestrians stop to watch a TV news broadcast of U.S. President George W. Bush speech with subtitles that read: "These days have been a difficult time for the air crews' families", projected on a screen in Hong Kong on Thursday, April 12, 2001.*

Washington or Beijing, for 12 hours after the plane landed at Hainan Island.

The delay infuriated Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who already had a much more skeptical view of the military-exchange program than his predecessor. Defense officials said Rumsfeld was angered by the failure of the Chinese to tell the truth about the incident and most of all by Beijing's mistreatment of an aircrew in distress.

Rumsfeld is reviewing the Clinton administration's ambitious program of military-to-military exchanges and has said that if the program is found to be benefiting Chinese intelligence while providing little benefit to the United States, it will be halted.

After the incident, Rumsfeld went public to challenge the false Chinese government explanation of the incident. He released a videotape of a Chinese F-8 pilot flying dangerously close to an EP-3E flight in January, an action that led to a diplomatic protest note that obviously was ignored.

"So the question is, what caused the collision?" Rumsfeld asked. "This is not an unusual practice to fly these reconnaissance flights. The United States has done it hundreds of times. At least six countries fly reconnaissance missions in Asia, including China.

Osborn's flight was "nothing new or different," Rumsfeld said.

"What is new is that the Chinese pilots had been maneuvering aggressively against our aircraft in recent months," he said.

Rumsfeld said the United States called on the Chinese and the PLA to



investigate the dangerous intercepts and “to prevent its recurrence and to ensure that all freedoms and rights under international law for the use of the sea and airspace was not infringed in the future.”

“It is clear that the pilot intended to harass the crew,” Rumsfeld said. “It was not the first time that our reconnaissance and surveillance flights flying in that area received that type of aggressive contact from interceptors.” The defense secretary went on to say that “we had every right to be flying where we were flying. They have every right to come up and observe our flight. What one does not have the right to do, and nor do I think it was anyone’s intention, is to fly into another aircraft. The F-8 pilot clearly put at risk the lives of 24 Americans.”

Rumsfeld criticized the “controlled press” in China for painting a false picture of events surrounding the collision and said he spoke out to set the record straight for the American people. “I think that it’s important for the people of the United States and the people of the world to hear what actually took place,” he said.



12 April 2001; Guam, USA; Crew members of the EP-3 pose for a photo with flight attendants of the chartered Continental Airlines aircraft which will fly them from Haikou, China, to Guam, during Operation Valiant Return.

Administration officials said that when the Chinese government finally began talking about how to resolve the dispute, they demanded an apology, something President Bush was refusing to do. “It was one of the president’s red lines that could not be crossed,” the senior official said. The others included the return of the aircraft and the continuation of surveillance flights.

Several forms of official regret were offered and China continued to demand an apology. Finally, wording was presented that expressed sorrow for the loss of the pilot but no acceptance of responsibility for the accident.

China’s government privately put out word that if it would be allowed to deliberately misinterpret U.S. expressions of regret as a blanket apology, the crew could be released. That took place, even though Secretary of State Colin Powell, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, made clear that the United States did not apologize for causing the incident.

“I am pleased to be able to tell the American people that plans are underway to bring home our 24 American servicemen and women from Hainan Island,” Bush announced on

11 April. “This has been a difficult situation for both our countries.”

James Lilley, a former U.S. Ambassador to China, said the Chinese government version of events was deliberately “inflammatory.”

As enthusiasm for communist ideology has waned in China as its market-oriented economy took root, Chinese communist leaders have been carefully cultivating a new nationalist-communist derivative, that is directed at building anti-American sentiment, analysts said.

Lilley believes the crisis was handled well by the administration. “The Chinese got pretty much what they wanted without us compromising our position or apologizing and taking guilt,” Lilley said. “That is terribly important, in the Chinese sense, that we didn’t do that. Because had we done that we would have just invited all kinds of other demands, from compensation to explanations, etc. etc. I think we handled it right and I don’t think we made any secret concessions to them.”

As for surveillance flights, which were cut off for almost a month after the 1 April incident, U.S. intelligence officials said important information about Chinese military activities has been missed.

Lilley believes the flights must be allowed to continue. “I don’t think we have any choice,” said Lilley, a former CIA official. “Their military is building up very rapidly. They are extending their submarines and Sovremenny-class destroyers, their airplanes are going further and further out all the time, they are deploying missiles at about the rate of fifty a year on the Fujian coast, they may be conducting an underground test of nuclear weapons, they are developing these long range ICBMs — DF31/ DF41 - we’ve got to watch these things very closely and I think we’ve got to have surveillance flights to do it because satellites can’t do the whole thing.”

The return of the aircraft may be the only physical remnant of the crisis.

However, the impact of China’s mishandling of U.S. military personnel will be felt for many years to come. The Pentagon, under the stewardship of Andrew Marshall, the Pentagon’s future warfare strategist, secretly is working on a new strategy that will make the threat from the People’s Republic of China a new priority. Marshall is a hawk who has said privately that every U.S. specialist on China security has been wrong.

In the end, the Hainan incident and China’s mishandling of it will prompt a much-needed re-evaluation of U.S.-China relations. The threat from China is growing stronger and Beijing will have a much harder time convincing its supporters in the United States that it is merely interested in doing business. China’s real motivation is to drive the United States out of Asia and become the dominant power — economically, diplomatically and militarily — in Asia and the world.

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AP/WideWorld

# OKC'S UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

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Will the Truth Die with Timothy McVeigh?

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BY ROGER CHARLES

**T**im McVeigh claims to have “told all” in the recent book, *American Terrorist*. This poorly disguised grab for neo-Nazi martyrdom by McVeigh only reinforces the specious claims of former President Bill Clinton and his co-conspirator, then-Attorney General Janet Reno, that all those legally culpa-

ble for killing 168 Americans — McVeigh, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier — had been brought before the bar of justice.

The casual observer might justifiably conclude that with both the now-admitted chief perpetrator and the chief law enforcement officers in the U.S. Government claiming that the

crime of the century has been fully explained, it is time to close the books on the largest mass murder in American history.

Such a conclusion would be just what McVeigh, Clinton and Reno, for entirely different reasons, wanted the soporific American public to think.

And, this conclusion would be dead wrong.

While the readers of *SOF* have seen a number of articles devoted to the Oklahoma City bombing (known officially as the OKBOMB case), there are several major unresolved issues dealing with this act of domestic terrorism, which have not been examined in light of more recent information.

The following discussion is not intended to provide definitive answers. Rather, it is intended to illustrate to *SOF* readers that the full truth about the Oklahoma City bombing remains untold. For instance, why has the U.S. Government avoided all discussion about the *second* yellow truck? And what role did a vehicle-tracking device play in the failure of federal law enforcement to prevent a bombing of which they had been pre-warned?

### The Second Yellow Truck

The bomb that destroyed the northern façade of the Murrah Federal Building was so powerful that it propelled most of the rear axle of a 1993 Ford truck for nearly an entire city block. This blast debris contained a partial vehicle identification number (VIN) that allowed the FBI to learn within a few hours that the rear axle had been part of a Ford truck rented only two days before from a Ryder franchise, Elliott's Body Shop, in Junction City, Kansas.

The next day, Thursday, 20 April, FBI agents began a massive canvassing of businesses in Junction City. One team visited the Dreamland Motel about noon and presented a sketch to the motel owner, Lea McGown.

The agents got some very good news, and some not-so-good news.

First, they determined that the occupant of Room 25 had been seen with a Ryder rental truck, that he had signed his room registration, Tim McVeigh, and had listed an address in Decker, Michigan as his residence. This was a major break in the case and led directly to the arrests the next day, Friday, 21 April, of Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols.

But Lea McGown also shocked the senior agents supervising the field investigators when they learned she had also spotted McVeigh with a yellow truck at her motel on Sunday, 16 April.

McGown never budged on this critical testimony, in spite of intense pressure from FBI agents to change her statements.

At least three other witnesses supported McGown's recollections about McVeigh and a yellow truck at the Dreamland Motel on Easter Sunday. Their recall was as unshakable as her memories. And all these sources tied their observations to Easter activities on that special Sunday.

These witnesses threatened to cause major problems to the U.S. government's neatly wrapped case. The Reno Justice Department claimed that McVeigh took possession of the Ryder rental truck at 4:19 p.m. (local) on Monday, 17 April, at

struck the IED at Geary Lake, a state recreational area 12 miles south of Junction City.

The FBI and local law enforcement put a road block on U.S. Route 77 which runs north-to-south along some high ground just a few hundred yards east of the spot on the shore of Geary Lake where prosecutors claimed McVeigh and Nichols built the bomb.

Local traffic had had a clear view of the bomb-building site, and the traffic survey worked. Nearly two dozen drivers told law enforcement officers that, yes, they had seen a yellow truck parked at the specified site. But, once again the feds got bad news along with the good.

Contrary to investigator's expectations, these witnesses had seen the yellow truck parked at the Geary Lake spot during the week *before* the Oklahoma City bombing, i.e., the week of 10-14 April.

This was not what the investigators wanted to hear and the FBI reports of interviews (known as "302"s) of these witnesses show that the interviewing agents made an intense effort to question the witnesses' memory. Several witnesses easily confirmed the dates of their observations by tying their sightings of a yellow truck during the week of 10-14 April to specific events on their personal calendars. Various witnesses remembered such date-certain events as picking a sick child up early from school and attending a funeral.

One witness was an Army NCO who had retired on 9 April, and had gone fishing on the mornings of 10, 12 and 13 April. He had seen the large yellow truck parked at the Geary Lake site on each of his morning fishing jaunts, and he damn sure knew the date of his last day of active duty in the U.S. Army.

There was no shaking the confidence of these witnesses that they had seen at the shore of Geary Lake a large yellow truck similar to the Ryder truck that carried the bomb. And, they had seen this truck several days *before* the Ryder rental truck with VIN PVA26077 was driven out of the parking area at Elliott's Body Shop.

Confronted with these I-am-positive-about-my-sighting statements, federal prosecutors dropped any mention of the "second yellow truck."

### Keeping It Neat

To admit that there was such a vehicle raised unwanted questions about

## Why has the U.S. Government avoided all discussion about the second yellow truck?

Elliott's Body Shop.

How could several very credible witnesses have seen McVeigh with a yellow truck on Sunday, more than 24 hours before he picked up the Ryder truck with partial VIN PVA26077? What happened to the truck McVeigh drove into the Dreamland parking area on Easter Sunday?

There is no doubt that the VIN-marked partial axle that landed on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Oklahoma City seconds after the 9:02 a.m. blast came from the Ryder rental truck picked up from Elliott's Body Shop. Government-released photographs of the axle show the VIN, proving that the Ryder rental truck picked up on Monday afternoon had carried the massive improvised explosive device (IED).

Unhappiness can be getting what you wish for — or, for FBI investigators, finding the witness you seek.

After McVeigh and Nichols were arrested on Friday, 21 April, Reno and Freeh sought to locate witnesses who would confirm the government's claim that McVeigh and Nichols con-

who else was involved in the OKBOMB case.

According to prosecutors, McVeigh left Kingman, Arizona, on 12 April and did not arrive in the Herington, Kansas area until Friday, 14 April. So who was with the second yellow truck and who turned it over to McVeigh on Easter Sunday?

The bigger question is, what possible role did this vehicle play in the OKBOMB case?

While there was some media attention on this issue, it never received the sustained focus from the national media that it deserved. Two media investigations that did delve into the question of the two yellow trucks were conducted by a regional U.S. newspaper and a foreign newspaper reporter.

The *Denver Post* mounted a six-month investigation that produced four credible witnesses who had seen a second yellow truck parked at the Geary Lake site in the week before the bombing. Confirming the credibility of the sightings at the Dreamland Motel, the *Denver paper* determined at the end of its inquiry that two yellow trucks had been involved in the OKBOMB case. It

opined that the additional truck, “could hold the key to unlocking one of the most enduring mysteries in the case — how many people were involved in the bombing?”

British journalist Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, then the Washington Bureau Chief for *The London Sunday Telegraph*, did what few American journalists did — he traveled the highways and byways of Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and wherever the OKBOMB story led him. (See his incredibly prescient book, *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton: The Unreported Stories*, especially Section One, “The Oklahoma Bombing.”)

In Junction City, he had no trouble finding a number of very credible witnesses who saw a large yellow truck, specifically a Ryder rental truck, at the Dreamland Motel on either Saturday or Sunday, before the 1993 Ford left Elliott’s Body Shop.

He also located witnesses who had seen the large yellow truck at Geary Lake, during the week of 10-14 April.

The totality of evidence is simply overwhelming — two large yellow trucks were connected to the bombing, through association with Tim McVeigh and

through conspicuous sightings at the site the U.S. Government claimed had been used for constructing the bomb.

### Ninja-Glad Men With Hoops

Oklahoma accountant Glenn Wilburn lost two grandchildren when McVeigh’s bomb destroyed the day-care center in the Murrah Federal Building. Several early *SOF* articles about the OKBOMB case referred to Glenn and his wife Kathy and their efforts to force the government to deal with hard evidence of a wider conspiracy, and its Siamese twin — prior government knowledge of threats against federal buildings in Oklahoma City.

When I first began work on the OKBOMB story in the summer of 1996 for *ABC news magazine 20/20*, Glenn Wilburn was one of the Oklahoma City residents widely known and respected in media circles as a credible source of independent information on the case.

On 7 and 8 August, *20/20* producer Don Thrasher and I sat in the Wilburn kitchen in north Oklahoma City for the first of many long briefings. Those first two evenings we spent several hours each night as Glenn and Kathy briefed us on the results of their inquiry. For over a year the Wilburns had worked closely with a wide range of journalists and reporters, swapping information and leads. The Wilburn kitchen table had seated an incredible number of national media figures from both print and television.

The Wilburns had also hosted a wide range of investigators working the OKBOMB case, including John D. (“J. D.”) Cash (a freelance investigator and journalist who broke many of the key stories), and Richard Reyna (the most experienced investigator working for the McVeigh defense team). Cash and the Wilburns had formed an especially close relationship and Cash actually worked out of the Wilburn home when staying in Oklahoma City.

On the evening of 7 August, Glenn related one of the more unusual stories of the entire OKBOMB case.

Glenn told of two separate sightings of SWAT-dressed personnel with “hoops.” (As a former intelligence officer in the Marine Corps I immediately thought that the hoops must have been direction-finding devices used to triangulate the location from which an electronic emitter was active.)

One observer had called a friend who was a local television news reporter to relay some intriguing information. This source had seen “black-



*SOF* investigative journalists James L. Pate and Richard L. Sherrow found this part of the Ryder truck’s transaxle blocks away from the blast and marked it for federal investigators.

clad" men with hoops on a street downtown in Oklahoma City within a few blocks of the Murrah Federal Building during the pre-dawn hours prior to the 9:02 a.m. explosion.

It would take some time before other investigators were able to obtain additional information.

The source had first spotted the ninja-hoopsters from his second floor office where he had been working the graveyard shift. Upon leaving the building and retrieving his car for the drive home, this source encountered a blocked street and was redirected. As he looked down the blocked street he saw men holding hoops and moving slowing down the street.

Although several investigators attempted to contact this source and clarify his sightings, the man refused to discuss the incident further. His initial comments did not provide some of the essential information, such as how many people were involved, who was blocking the street, etc.

These rather sketchy observations and the refusal of the source to expand upon his initial comments did not generate much enthusiasm for more intensive investigation.

But, Charles Key, then an Oklahoman state legislator, developed information that a husband and wife (both local attorneys) had also seen the ninja-hoopsters on a downtown city street. This couple's observations tracked with the initial source and they also reported that they too had been redirected away from the street with the strange activity.

This couple also declined direct interview but did pass word that they were prepared to come forward if there were signs that the federal government wanted to conduct a serious inquiry into the OKBOMB case. (There has been no such sign to date.)

The second set of observers mentioned by Glenn consisted of a husband and wife who had been travelling on Interstate 44 (on the west side of Oklahoma City) near the state fairgrounds at around 4:00 to 4:30 on the morning of the bombing. These observers reported that "a white car with yellow stripes" and a flashing emergency light had blocked I-44. As the sources were allowed to slowly pass the white car, they had spotted "men with hoops" raised over their heads on the shoulder and in the median of the highway while other ninja-clad men

searched the grassy areas.

Certainly the reports were intriguing but with none of the principals willing to go on the record, or for that matter, willing to talk to investigators, these sightings remained too sketchy to tie them directly to the OKBOMB case.

The situation remained static until 28 April 1998 when the *Washington Post* carried its front-page, lead story under the headline, "U.S. LACKING IN TERRORISM DEFENSES." The sub-lead was "Study Cites a Need To Share Intelligence." *Post* reporter Roberto Suro wrote in his lead paragraph:

*Three years after the Oklahoma City bombing, a major interagency study has found widespread deficiencies in the federal government's ability to combat terrorism, from a lack of intelligence-shar-*

They had spotted "men with hoops" raised over their heads on the shoulder and in the median of the highway while other ninja-clad men searched the grassy areas.

*ing on domestic plotters to the need for smaller tracking devices that will escape detection when placed on people and cars. (Emphasis added.)*

Later in the article Suro states that the FBI's number-one hardware need for combating domestic terrorism is a "reduction in size of tracking devices, currently difficult to install covertly due to large size."

This article does not explicitly prove that the FBI used a vehicle (or person) tracking device on one of the two yellow trucks involved in the Oklahoma City bombing. But, a reasonable person can rightly infer that this major government study examined in detail federal law enforcement's failure to prevent the most deadly act of domestic terrorism in our nation's history.

And the item highest on the FBI's list of critically needed equipment to fight domestic terrorism is a smaller, more easily hidden tracking device!

#### Andy "The German" Reveals Inside Information

But it was Evans-Pritchard's interview questions with the former lieutenant of Germany's *Panzer Grenadiers*, Andreas Carl Strassmeir, which added

the glue to bind the disparate pieces together.

In the late spring of 1996, Evans-Pritchard had several conversations with this former head of military training and security at the Christian Identity compound in eastern Oklahoma, Elohim City. By this time, over a year after the bombing, Strassmeir was sitting tight in his family's home in Berlin.

As related in his book and in personal conversations to me, Evans-Pritchard had elicited several incriminating admissions from Strassmeir, including two that directly relate to the issues of the yellow trucks and the vehicle-tracking device.

First, Strassmeir stated on the record that there were two yellow trucks involved in the conspiracy. And, secondly, he stated that the truck carrying the bomb had also "had a transmitter, so they could track it with a radio receiving device. I don't know how they could have lost contact."

While Strassmeir's claims need to be taken with the proverbial grain of salt, there is compelling evidence that he had access to prior knowledge regarding the bombing.

As far as I have been able to determine, this *SOF* article is the first time any publication has written about the observations of the ninja-clad hoopsters. Until Evans-Pritchard published his book, no one had written about the vehicle-tracking device being on the bomb truck.

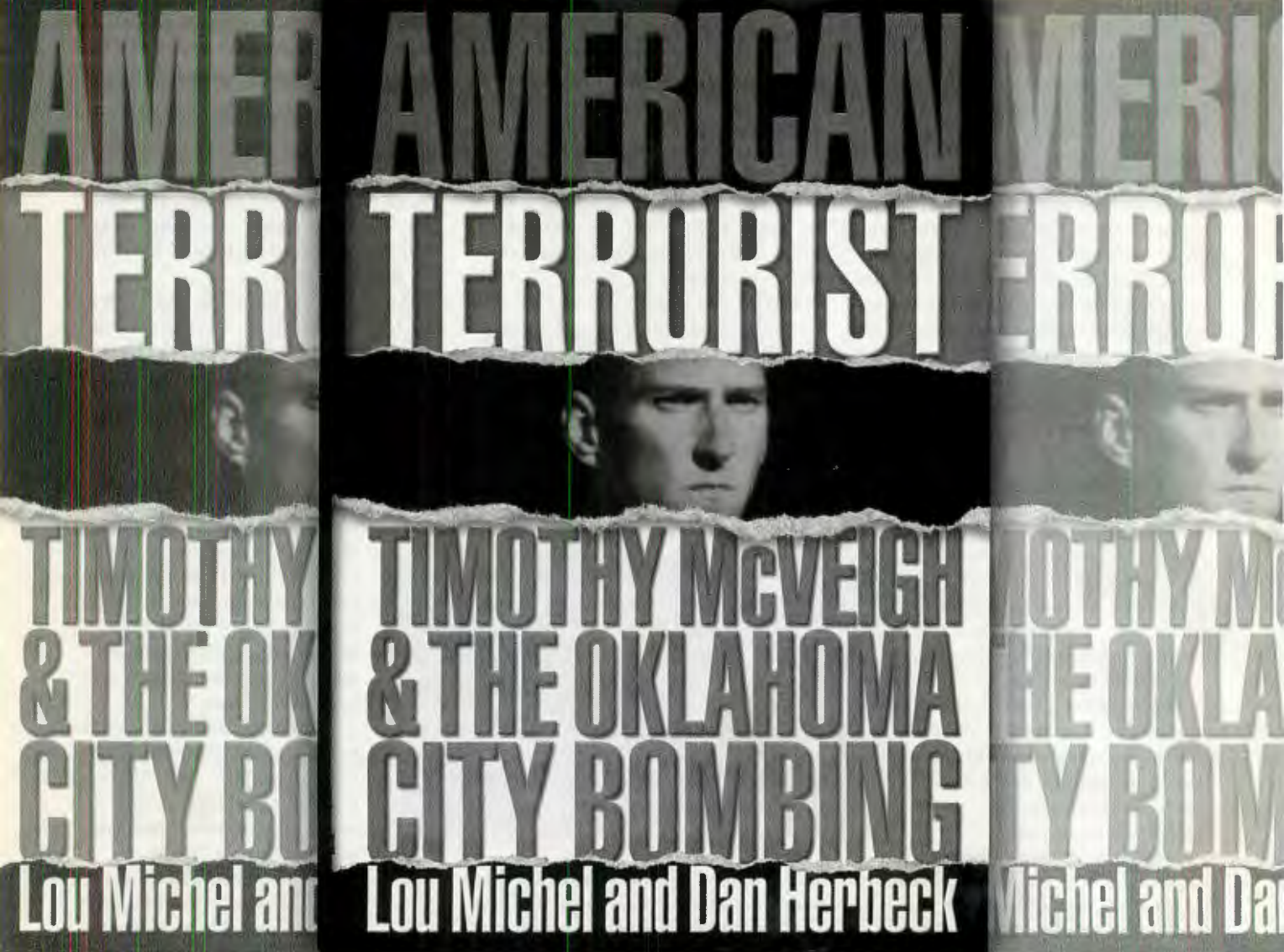
So, where did Strassmeir, in Germany in 1996, get information about a vehicle-tracking device that correlates with both the sightings in Oklahoma City, and the FBI's most-critical hardware shortfall?

Coincidence is hardly a reasonable explanation.

Is it then too much of a stretch to connect the three sightings of ninja-hoopsters with their direction-finding gear to the following scenario? Surely less of a stretch than the one that purports to have solved the crime:

- One, a tracking device had been placed on the yellow truck that federal law enforcement was monitoring.
- Two, the bombers had accounted for this risk in their planning and had taken the appropriate counter-

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# LAST WORDS — LAST LIES

*American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & The Oklahoma City Bombing*

REVIEWED BY J. D. CASH

PHOTO COURTESY REGANBOOKS/HARPERCOLLINS

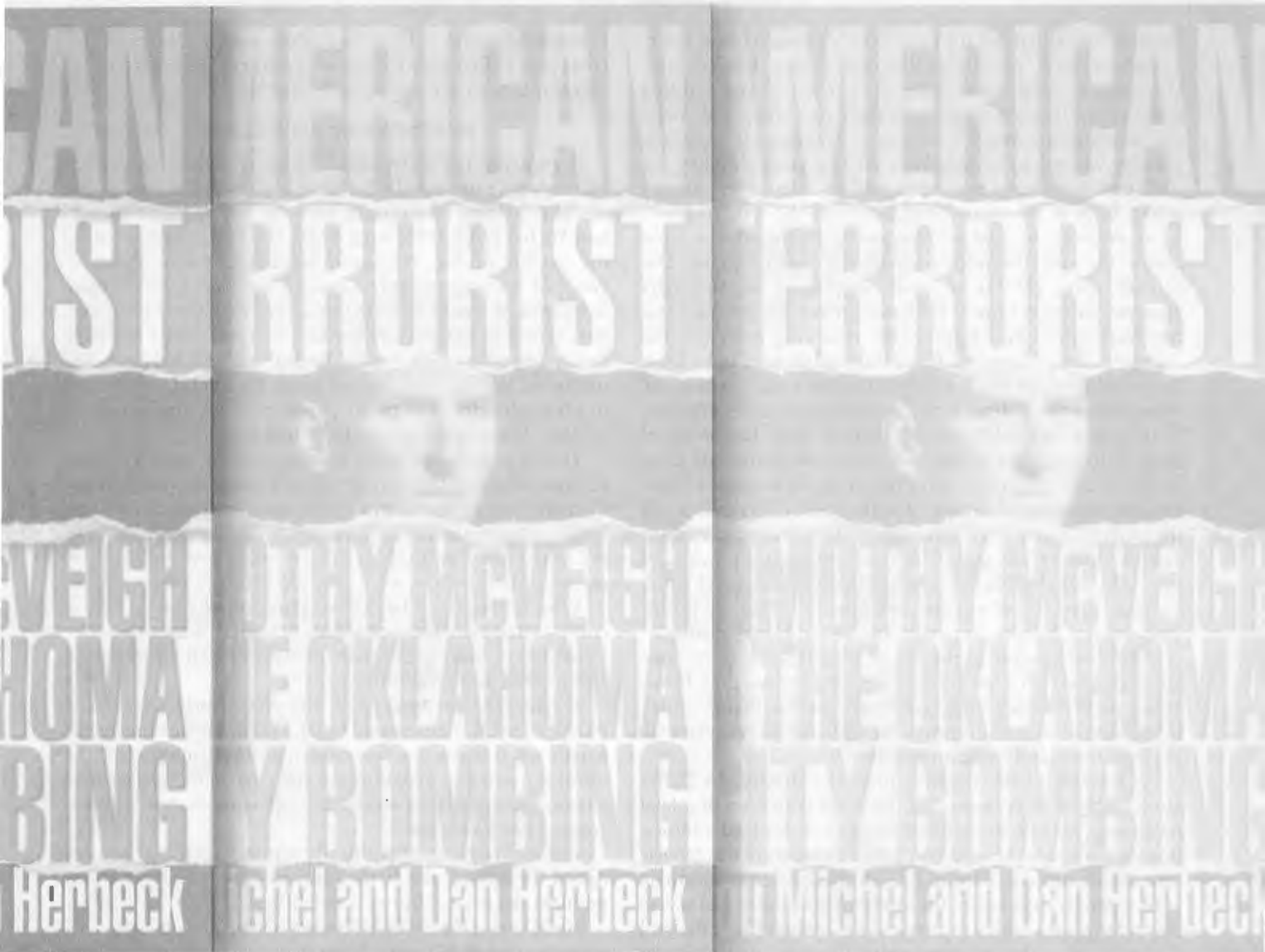
AS the nation's focus turned to Terre Haute, Indiana for the execution of Timothy McVeigh, a new book made the stands, just in time to cash in on the "Roman Holiday" surrounding the execution of this nation's most despised death-row inmate.

*American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & The Oklahoma City Bombing* entered the marketplace in a tornado of glitzy publicity and heavy hype. Promising to be the final word on the 19 April 1995 truck bombing of the A. P. Murrah Federal Building, the Madison Avenue-types pumped the networks for unprecedented airtime to promote Lou Michel's and Dan Herbeck's 426-page work.

Published by ReganBooks, in conjunction with

HarperCollins, this was to be a no-holes-barred tell-all — straight from the lips of Timothy McVeigh. The marketing department said it would put to rest all the conspiracy theories generated by the mass murder. This was to be *the* book on the Oklahoma City bombing.

By now you've probably read or heard excerpts of the story. McVeigh takes center-stage, declaring himself the mastermind of the crime. Convicted co-conspirator, Terry Nichols, we are told, only helped his ex-Army buddy stash his car in OKC, and mix the bomb in Kansas, because McVeigh threatened to kill him. Mike Fortier is almost totally let off the hook for his involvement. And John Doe #2? Oh, well, he never really existed. The authors would have us believe the man was a fig-



ment of scores of witnesses' imaginations.

So, can *American Terrorist* deliver the corroborating evidence to back all this up?

Before we launch into an analysis, it might help to put some important elements in perspective. First, I've investigated and reported on this case for six long years. Clearly, I am damned ready for anyone to name names. Certainly the victims' relatives are too. But as I waited for a copy of this book, I remained skeptical any of us would get our wish. After all, the book's primary source is McVeigh. And, oh, how well I know that boy's track record.

On 13 February 1996, I interviewed Mr. McVeigh at El-Reno Federal Prison, just outside Oklahoma City. I came away impressed by only one thing: Mr. McVeigh was no leader. I found him to be immature and easily manipulated. His hot buttons were fringe right-wing ideology and fantasies involving women. Push those buttons and Sergeant Mac was your boy. The perfect "patsy."

### The Merry "Crankster"

Conversations over the years with witnesses, family members, friends and members of his trial team have reinforced those impressions. And there were other important reasons to carefully question McVeigh's statements: LSD and crystal-meth. His sister, Jennifer, confirmed her brother's

involvement with both.

During his first weeks in jail, McVeigh exhibited all the symptoms of a "crankster" coming down from the destructive effects of the powerful stimulant. Neighbors of Michael Fortier also confirmed the pair had been on a drug-induced "roller coaster" the last months before the bombing.

Aware of this and other factors, lawyers for the prisoner came to believe their client was delusional; that McVeigh was living out a fantasy — a fantasy eerily similar to the storyline in the fictional book, *The Turner Diaries*. Also disturbing, McVeigh was captivated by Revolutionary War hero, Patrick Henry. Some wondered if McVeigh might actually believe he was the reincarnation of the patriot.

From the beginning it was up to court-appointed attorney, Stephen Jones, to challenge his client with the facts his team of defense investigators were coming up with. Jones wanted to elicit the truth from McVeigh about every element of the crime he might be familiar with.

For his money, Jones suspected Mr. McVeigh was part of a group intent on the overthrow of the federal government. Nothing his investigators came to him with proved otherwise. If this were so, evidence that he was a *minor* player was McVeigh's only real hope of escaping the death penalty. The federal death penalty statute allows evidence of a wider conspiracy to be introduced as a mitigating factor for a jury to



consider. It could mean the difference between life and death.

Shortly after accepting the case, Jones leveled with McVeigh, "Son, no one is going to believe that you and that other rube, Terry Nichols, pulled-off this thing." McVeigh chafed under the brutal assessment. Timothy McVeigh desperately wanted to be *somebody*. At this point, if being the "fall guy" for a mass murder would get him in the history books, so be it. He stonewalled Jones and the rest.

As evidence of a wider conspiracy developed, the more hostile the visits between lawyers and client became. The defense team grew ever more suspicious as McVeigh's accounts changed as new evidence proved his previous stories impossible. But despite this mounting evidence, the client remained adamant, "If the team didn't want to be fired; they would let him run the show." He didn't want to hear any more of this "conspiracy crap!" Screaming matches ensued.

It is true that McVeigh decided to wash his hands of Stephen Jones on the eve of the Denver federal trial. He came to the bizarre conclusion after one more in a string of false confessions managed to make it to the media. This time it was the *Dallas Morning News* reporting that McVeigh had told the defense team he was guilty. Insiders could not walk out and say, "Oh, yeah, but the bastard has lied about so much other stuff, we don't know whether he's nuts or telling the truth." This was not the time to parade all this out for the media.

Published so close to the day of the trial's start, any hope McVeigh could get a fair hearing went out the window. It was at this point, I believe, the seeds were planted that eventually produced *American Terrorist*. McVeigh would get even with his legal team, and some other folks.

As a result of the negative pretrial publicity the *Dallas Morning News* story generated, McVeigh curled up in a fetal position in his cell and refused to speak to his lead attorney. Hoping to mollify the situation, other members of the defense team would drop in to try to smooth things over. It was to no avail. Literally days before the multi-million dollar trial was to begin, McVeigh decided to contact U.S. District Judge Richard P. Matsch and left a message asking the jurist to arrange for him to have a new lawyer. Matsch refused to return the call. McVeigh would "dance with the gal that brung 'im."

Later, a member of the defense told me that every morning when the marshals brought in the *Star*, everyone at the table studied McVeigh for any hint of what he might do. Many expected "the client" to ask the judge to change his plea to *guilty* and then go off on a tirade about Jones, the government, Waco, Ruby Ridge, etc. "None of us could sleep nights," the attorney admitted. "He was the client from hell."

The rest is history. The trial turned out to be a nonevent for anyone looking for answers.

Years later, watching the case wind through the appeals process, I held out hope McVeigh would drop the *Silent Brotherhood* routine and tell it all. His pals were not going to bust him out of Super Max. That stuff only happens in *The Turner Diaries*. So, when the news broke that McVeigh had been feeding a couple of reporters at the *Buffalo News* a story about the bombing, I wondered: Would he really give it all up? Most doubted he would. And most turned out to be right.

The authors of *American Terrorist* jumped on the story, just as the world got its first glimpse of those chiseled features of Tim McVeigh being led from the Noble County jail, in Oklahoma. Lou Michel scrambled to Bill McVeigh's residence in Pendleton, a suburb of Buffalo, New York. Upon his arrival, the reporter realized the father of the alleged killer was already in the grips of the FBI. Bill McVeigh wouldn't be giving any interviews for awhile. Michel and the rest of the

newshounds were held at bay while agents ransacked the home and grilled the shocked autoworker. The reporter was diligent, though. He would wait them out.

### Persistence Overcomes Resistance

Eventually, the determined reporter would catch Bill McVeigh after the initial tidal wave of cops and snoops receded. After gaining an audience with the grief-stricken parent, Lou Michel and Bill McVeigh began their relationship out in the garden of the Pendleton residence, where the pair swapped growing tips. Over time, a bond between the men developed. It would be from this entrée that, years later, and after scores of letters were penned, Timothy James McVeigh finally agreed to speak "on the record" with Michel about his role in the killings. The authors admit the final straw that led to McVeigh's decision to go public was the publishing of Stephen Jones' book, *Others Unknown*.

Timothy McVeigh was determined to trump Jones' account, which left the world with the impression he was little more than a "patsy" in a wider conspiracy of major players. Now, more than ever, the convicted killer needed a book published about his exploits. Michel and fellow *Buffalo News* reporter, Dan Herbert, were only too happy to oblige.

What followed is a book that spins Timothy McVeigh as a crafty ladies man and gun-toting defender of the American Constitution, who goes toe-to-toe with an evil empire. He's also pitched as a great philosopher:

*People need to understand, the New World Order is a metaphor, not just a paranoid belief. When you look around it's happening. It means one superpower, which is going to lead the world to a new age. People on the other end of the gun see it as one superpower forcing others. You will agree with us or we're going to bomb your ass.*

And McVeigh can be politically astute. Regarding the murder of 19 babies, the book addresses the public relations problem the dead children created:

*Had I known there was a day-care center, it might have given me pause to switch targets. That's a lot collateral damage.*

And he can borrow a slick phrase:

*One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.*

The writers begin McVeigh's "image makeover" with a survey of his childhood. From an orderly account emerges a picture of a somewhat typical young man, who endures adolescence in a home fraught with marital discord. Eventually, McVeigh's parents will split and the family is torn apart by divorce. His two sisters will go with their mother; Tim, though, will stay with his father — a no-nonsense blue-collar worker, who prefers bowling with his pals to campouts with his only son.

Bullied by classmates, ignored by girls, Sigmund Freud would fly into cartwheels after learning Timmy turns to guns for his pleasure. Over time, this firearms fetish will be followed by the stockpiling of water and other survivalist gear. Here, apparently, is the stuff of which mass-murderers are made.

Following McVeigh's graduation from high school, he will make a fateful decision. After only a short stint in college, McVeigh decides he knows more than his teachers and drops out. He will try the Army. In the Army, they have lots of big guns, the writers point out. At Fort Benning, Timmy will stay in his barracks, studying books about those big guns, while the rest of the recruits are out chasing women.

Is the psychobabble seeping in yet?

Also at Benning, two characters emerge who will cast dark shadows across McVeigh's remaining days on earth. Enter the freewheeling, dope-smoking, acid-dropping Mike Fortier and

his polar opposite, Terry Nichols, a tax-protester and serial loser with a fanatic dislike for all things government.

Eventually, the military careers of Fortier and Nichols fall by the wayside. Fortier takes a medical "early out" for a sore back. Terry Nichols goes home with a family hardship discharge.

### Top Gun

On the Bradley IFV, McVeigh will set records for marksmanship. His ability to handle the fighting vehicle's 25-mm cannon astonishes his superiors. During one live-fire competition, he will score a near-perfect, 998 out of 1,000 points. McVeigh earns the Top Gun trophy. A star was born. In a two-year period, Timothy McVeigh will soar from private to sergeant. His future seemed blessed. All McVeigh needs now is a war to prove just how good, or bad, he really is. The stars were aligned. And Saddam gives him his dream-shot.

Operation Desert Storm was a made-to-order combat environment for the Bradley and a man like Tim McVeigh. He excels in the 100-hour campaign, earning a Bronze Star. But there was more to come. At last, he will get a shot at that most coveted legion — the U. S. Army Special Forces. But at this cruel juncture, fate deals McVeigh a bad hand. Only 48 hours into the rigorous training, he calls it quits. "Sore feet," he claims.

Discharged and back in economically depressed upstate New York, Citizen McVeigh finds himself living with his aloof father and party-animal sister, Jennifer, who has moved back home and taken over his old room. Bunking on the sofa is not what the war hero expected.

From here the book correctly records McVeigh experimenting with serious drugs and joining the Ku Klux Klan. Next, hoping to further escape the reality of a security guard job that can't provide the "playboy lifestyle" that McVeigh yearns for, he turns to a sports bookie for more adventure. He quickly finds it. McVeigh gambles away every dime he can muster, and more. Heavily in debt, he packs up and hits the road.

Today, we know McVeigh's life will dramatically impact a nation, only a couple of years after leaving New York. Once on the road, he will write his sister about a "network of friends" that he describes as "ex-military-types." He will also write about robbing banks and about a coming revolution in which he will play a part. This is the big story. However, the authors are unable to get McVeigh to discuss this in a substantive way. Instead, we get a disjointed story that ignores the evidence and defies common sense.

McVeigh is portrayed as a "lone wolf," enraged by the government's actions at Waco and Ruby Ridge. Bouncing coast-to-coast, we get a picture of a malcontent searching endlessly for evidence of government-sponsored concentration camps, UN troops and UFO landing sites. But no names are mentioned other than Mike Fortier and Terry Nichols.

### Follow The Money?

If one accepts Michel and Herbeck's account, our vagabond survives off the sale of bumper stickers and copies of *The Turner Diaries*. The most obvious question is avoided: How? How does someone with nothing on the asset side of his balance sheet but a trashed car, survive on the road for over two years with no evidence of income beyond a couple of minimum wage jobs that last only a few weeks?

As an example of McVeigh's frantic travels, just take a look at a 100-day period, beginning in January 1993. Admittedly broke and heavily in debt, McVeigh quits his job and travels from upstate New York to Florida. Next he will go to New

Orleans for Mardi Gras. After soaking that up, Mr. McVeigh will head to Waco, Texas, to see, first-hand, what all the trouble is there. After a brief stay, he's off to Kingman, Arizona, where he provides a sitrep to his pal, Mike Fortier. Next stop, "The Tulsa Gun and Knife Show." Here, McVeigh will meet with the infamous Andreas "The German" Strassmeir. After that experience, he's off to Hot Springs, Arkansas, for a few days with a couple he met at the Tulsa show. From Arkansas, our vagabond heads back to Florida. After a quick turnaround, Mr. McVeigh's right back in Hot Springs. Tires sizzling, McVeigh will then launch for Decker, Michigan, and a visit with the Nichols clan for a few days. After catching up with those folks, he's on the road back to Kingman, where he rents a residence to serve as his temporary base camp.

You do the math. In just one hundred days since quitting his security job in New York, McVeigh has put over 10,000 miles on his car. This pattern repeats itself for the following two-year period, leading up to the bombing of the federal building. By any reasonable estimate, this lifestyle would cost over \$50,000.00 — regardless of the evidence that Timothy McVeigh sometimes stayed at friends' homes. Compare those expense dollars with an estimate of McVeigh's income for this same 27-month period and you would find he made less than \$5,000.00 from a couple of part-time jobs — jobs that lasted only a few weeks. It would take a world-class salesman to make up the difference selling copies of *The Turner Diaries*.

We already know that in the aftermath of the bombing, McVeigh's sister admitted to the FBI she got involved laundering some \$100 bills from a bank robbery her brother had been involved in. Nichols' ex-wife admitted to the FBI that she, too, suspected something illegal was going on after she discovered her chronically unemployed ex-husband had salted away \$60,000 in cash and silver in her home and a storage locker, that also contained wigs, masks and a make-up kit.

You would think this evidence might pique the authors' imaginations, especially when at one point in *American Terrorist* they relate an account of Tim McVeigh giving his father \$4,000 in \$100 bills. But here, once again, we are left in wonderland. Michel and Herbeck never offer an explanation for these \$100 bills that keep raining down on McVeigh.

Another serious omission to taint the credibility of this book is the authors' lack of research into McVeigh's links to Elohim City and the group of bank robbers that frequented the sprawling Christian Identity compound. *American Terrorist* ignores overwhelming evidence contained in BATF reports detailing work by undercover informant, Carol Howe, outlining a bombing conspiracy involving persons at Elohim City.

Also passed over are his well-established connections to the compound, such as a traffic ticket McVeigh was given a few minutes from the compound in the fall of 1993 — only months after his sudden departure from New York. This is also the very time McVeigh begins writing letters to sister, Jennifer, extolling the virtues of bank robbers. And most astonishing, there is no mention in the book that, on the day the grand jury says the plot to bomb the Murrah Building was hatched, McVeigh was registered in a motel room a short drive from Elohim City.

And then there is the incredible fact that the patriot synod of Elohim City, twice-convicted murderer Richard Wayne Snell, is executed by the state of Arkansas, exactly 12 hours after the bomb explodes at the Oklahoma City

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# The Rising Midnight Sun

BY FRANK HOPKINS

PHOTOS COURTESY OFFICE OF HISTORY, ALASKAN AIR COMMAND

**The** cold Alaskan fog had started to lift as the Japanese fleet under command of Vice Admiral Moshiro Hosogaya steamed to within 170 miles of Dutch Harbor, Alaska. It was 3 June 1942 — six months after Pearl Harbor, and mere hours away from the fateful Battle of Midway, which would be a landmark in the Pacific War.

In an orchestrated attack that Admiral Yamamoto hoped would both siphon U.S. naval assets from Midway and secure bases in the Aleutians to protect Japan's northern flank, fighters and bombers took off from the Japanese carriers *Ryujo* and *Junyo*, setting a course through the fog toward Dutch Harbor. Heavy cruisers *Maya* and *Takas*, plus three destroyers, were in escort. Transports carrying 2,500 assault/occupation troops waited with the fleet. Five I-class submarines scouted American and Canadian waters from

Kodiak to the Aleutian island of Attu, and south to Seattle.

Just six weeks earlier, Jimmy Doolittle's B-25s had rained destruction and fear on the Japanese homeland. Although Doolittle had flown from aboard the U.S.S. *Hornet* sailing 700 miles off the Japanese homeland, many Japanese assumed he had launched his attack from bases in the Aleutians. Within weeks, Japanese General Headquarters had issued Navy Order #18, which directed the commander-in-chief of the combined fleet to "invade and occupy Midway Island and key points in the western Aleutians in cooperation with the Army, in order to prevent enemy task forces from making attacks against the homeland."

The northern objective of this order was to destroy Dutch Harbor, overrun and destroy the American garrison they thought was on Adak, then withdraw and occupy the essentially uninhabited

islands of Kiska and Attu.

The operational outline called for the Japanese invasion troops to "capture and demolish points of strategic value on western Aleutian Islands in order to check the enemy's air and ship maneuvers in this area." Within the context of this operational outline, two specific missions were assigned:

"The Army and Navy, in close cooperation with each other, will capture Adak island and withdraw after having demolished enemy installations and equipment. Following capture of the island, the Army troops and Navy Special Landing Forces will capture Attu and Kiska Islands respectively. They shall hold these two islands until the coming winter.

"The Navy will provide strong support for the invasion force and, at the same time employ a carrier unit to raid Dutch Harbor for the main purpose of reducing enemy air strength prior to our landing."

Thus we see that, although the

Japanese attacks on Alaska were timed to act as a diversion to the attacks on Midway, they had their own important strategic purpose. The seizure and occupation of Kiska and Attu would hopefully provide protection to their exposed northern flank in the Japanese Kurile Islands, and prevent counterattacks from American forces in the north, on the Japanese forces that would occupy Midway. With the mindset that Doolittle had flown from the Aleutians, and with the American probing already a threat to the Kuriles, the Japanese high command viewed the Aleutian operation as an important initiative.

### To Control The North Pacific

Japan planned to establish seaplane bases from which long-range patrols could cover the 1,400 miles between the Aleutians and Midway. These, with surface patrols, would form an effective picket line to prevent any repetition of the Doolittle raid, they reasoned. It was further hoped that their occupation of two or more of the Aleutian Islands would isolate the United States and Canada from the Soviets, and prevent their collaboration in the Pacific theater

against the Japanese. Captured Japanese army documents also cited plans to use these Alaskan bases for operations against the U.S./Canadian mainland.

The Japanese did not entertain illusions as to the suitability of these islands for winter operations, thus their initial plan to only hold them until winter. If these ice-covered isles were unsuitable for Japanese winter use, they reasoned, they would also be unsuitable for American winter use. This, we shall see, did not take into account that Americans would pay the price to use any piece of real estate they needed — weather be damned.

The Japanese Northern Area Force under Adm. Hosogaya was built around the Fifth Fleet, which was based in the northern Kurile Islands, and whose primary mission was to protect Japan against possible Soviet incursions from the north.

Hosogaya planned the Aleutian campaign in three phases: Phase One was the attack on Dutch Harbor and occupation of the western islands (Kiska, Adak and Attu). Phase Two was to consolidate his defenses and prepare for a counter-attack. Phase Three, scheduled

for less than three weeks after the invasion, called for the relocation of ships and the building of bases to guard the North Pacific and the gateway to the Japanese home islands.

Hosogaya's Adak-Attu invasion force comprised one light cruiser, four destroyers, three assault troop transports and a seaplane tender. Had they actually invaded Adak, they would have been disappointed to find no U.S. garrison there, but as we shall see, the Yanks had a similar disappointment somewhat later. The Japanese Kiska "invasion" force (in reality, an occupation force) consisted of two light cruisers, two converted cruisers, four destroyers and three converted gunboats. Its mission was to proceed directly to Kiska and land the Navy's Third Special Landing Force, comprising 500 Marines and an accompaniment of 700 construction personnel.

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*Northern China? Korea? Alaska! After repeated air attacks on Dutch Harbor, Japanese troops patrol occupied Alaskan islands in 1942 — the only instance since the War of 1812 of enemy troops occupying American soil. (Captured enemy photo)*





*Selecting the northernmost known American military installation, Japanese naval task force attacked Dutch Harbor twice, inflicting considerable damage. These "Val" dive bombers (inset), flew from the Junyo on 4 June 1942 to bomb Ft. Mears, tank farms, hospital, vessels in the harbor. (Captured enemy photo)*

Contingency plans called for Adm. Hosogaya to access four battleships and two destroyer divisions from a projected successful Midway occupation force, in the event Americans turned north to counter these Japanese inroads into Alaskan territory. This did not happen, of course, because Admiral Nimitz kicked Yamamoto's butt all over the Pacific at the Battle of Midway, which was to have bearing on how the Japanese modified their grandiose plans in the Aleutians, and along the North American coast.

Having broken the Japanese Purple Code, American Naval Intelligence had been monitoring radio traffic. This, along with other intelligence assets, pointed to an imminent invasion, but we were not sure where. Using the priceless data provided by Commander Joe Rochefort's cryptographic wizards, Adm. Nimitz had been able to successfully counter the Japanese at the Battle of the Coral Sea. Now, just in time, ONI was able to define the next point of

attack as Midway — with Alaska a contemporaneous target.

Any solid intelligence is good news, but this was particularly good news, as we had been anticipating further attacks anywhere along the West Coast of North America, and American and Canadian defenses were spread pretty thin. Intelligence projections were for the attacks to be around the first of June. They didn't miss by much.

#### Hit Alaska First

Thus the foggy morning of 3 June 1942 saw the Japanese force under the command of Adm. Hosogaya attacked Alaska first, setting the stage for the southern force under Adm. Yamamoto to attack Midway the next day.

Sixteen planes from the *Ryujo* struck Dutch Harbor, and for 25 minutes rained unopposed destruction upon the town and upon Ft. Mears. Twenty-five G.I.s were killed at Ft. Mears, a radio station and oil tanks were blown up, several buildings including the hospital

were damaged, and a lot of ordnance went harmlessly into the harbor. One Navy PBY was shot up trying to take off, and another shot down at sea 200 miles south of Dutch Harbor.

Planes from the *Junyo* were unable to reach the target area because of the bad weather conditions, but raining upon the just and unjust alike, the same weather hindered American defensive efforts.

Although the attacks on Midway and Alaska were anticipated, a radio message to Ft. Glenn on Umnak Island warning of the attack did not get through. Secret bases for the 11th USAAF had been prepared on Umnak Island and at Cold Bay, to protect naval facilities, but Japanese intelligence knew nothing of them. They expected only a few Navy PBYs would resist their attack, and on the first day they were correct — except for four Japanese float bombers who strayed off course and found themselves over Umnak. Two were shot down and two made it back to the task force, with no idea where the American fighters who shot down their comrades had come from.

And where they had come from were the secret bases on Umnak, where P-40s of Major Jack Chennault's

"Aleutian Tigers" of the 11th Fighter Squadron lay in wait. Had they known who jumped their planes over Umnak, the Japanese probably would have been particularly irritated as the P-40s of Jack's father, Colonel Claire Chennault, and his "Flying Tiger" volunteers had already been giving them fits in the Chinese theater for some time, slowing the Japanese advances there to a frustrating and very costly crawl.

Japanese plans were to attack and occupy Adak the next day, but the weather on 4 June socked them in again, so Adm. Hosogaya opted for a second attack to finish the job on Dutch Harbor. This second day of fighting was more two-sided. The attack was stronger, but this time the planes from Umnak responded and there were dogfights. The Japanese naval task force was spotted and American PBYs and B-26 bombers flew sorties in an attempt to sink the enemy carriers, but without results. The tally at sunset was 78 Americans killed and 14 planes shot down. The Japanese fared better, losing 15 men and less than a dozen planes.

#### Half A Loaf

But the 4th of June also saw the Battle of Midway become a resounding defeat for the Japanese. Admiral Yamamoto radioed the northern task force for their planes to abort the attack on Alaska and steam south immediately, but the message was received too late. With the Battle of Midway lost,



*Virtually unopposed, Japanese occupied Alaskan islands of Kiska and Attu, quickly building extensive bases from which to control North Pacific and protect their northern flank — and from which to launch further attacks on North America. Here, Japanese troops do their morning calisthenics on Kiska, March 1942. (Captured enemy photo)*

Yamamoto wanted to abandon the Aleutian campaign, but higher quarters were convinced they should continue, anyway, in an effort to save face by salvaging some sort of victory. The straightest shot for a victorious campaign is to assault an essentially unmanned island, and since Dutch Harbor and Adak were also the farthest from Japanese supply lines, the Japanese opted to continue the scheduled invasion of the seaward and nearly uninhabited islands of Kiska and Attu.

Although the Japanese attackers inflicted numerically more casualties because of their bombing, it had been a marginally effective campaign thus far in Alaska. No ground was taken, no notable vessels sunk, and although they did shoot down more planes than they lost, one of the ones they lost in a punch-up with a PBY was a Zero that

went down on Akutan Island with a slug through its oil line. The pilot had never landed on muskeg and tried it wheels down, flipped over and was killed. His neck was broken, but his Zero was essentially intact, and when spotted a few weeks later this intelligence prize was retrieved and taken south for study and evaluation.

Thus, having decided to continue with the occupation of Kiska and Attu, on the morning of 7 June the Japanese Navy's Third Special Landing Force stormed ashore on Kiska and attacked the 10 U.S. sailors who manned a weather station there. The sailors headed for

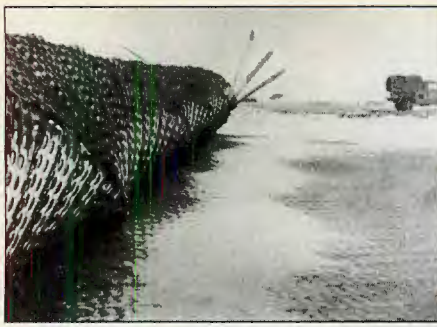
the hills, but all were captured within a week, save Ensign Bill House, who held out for a month and a half but, facing starvation, finally gave himself up. All were taken to Japan and held as POWs, and all returned to the States after the war.

At the same time, Japanese troop transports steamed into Massacre Bay on Attu and sent 1,200 troops ashore, who quickly overran the small village and captured its 39 Aleut residents. The Bureau of Indian Affairs had a husband-and-wife team on the island, and after quickly sending a radio message that they had been overrun Charles Jones tried to make a run for it and was gunned down — the only casualty of the invasion. His wife and all the Aleuts were taken to Japan for internment for the duration of the war. Seventeen Native Americans would die as prison-



*Even without a U.S./Canadian task force preparing to pounce, Japanese found Aleutians hostile territory. Heavy seas pound Japanese Navy "Rufe" float fighter in Kiska Harbor and (inset) naval personnel chip ice off patrol craft. (Captured enemy photos)*





ers of the Japanese.

American planes from Umnak and ships under the command of Admiral Robert Theobald continued to search the north Pacific for the Japanese fleet, but under cover of the weather they had sailed back toward Japan, even before we had confirmed that they were in possession of Kiska and Attu. Many times in the months and battles which lay ahead in the Alaskan theater, the capricious weather would be the deciding factor in battles won or lost, escapes made good or not, as it made alliances according to the vagaries of its own meteorological whims.

### Natural Fog Of War

If the Japanese favored a particular island for occupation because of its unopposed potential as a base and staging area, so did the U.S. forces. The island of Adak, where the Japanese assumed we had already established bases and garrisons, is a rugged volcanic island with peaks approaching 4,000 feet. It lies 435 miles west of Dutch Harbor, and some 270 miles east of Kiska. Close enough.

In spite of its 100-mph winds, heavy precipitation and fog (common to all the Aleutian chain), Adak was the island of choice as a first staging area to launch attacks on the Japanese who were now firmly entrenched on Kiska and Attu.

In August 1942, Alaskan Scouts went ashore on Adak and reconnoitered. Although it was known they sent frequent patrols through the area, there were no Japanese on the island. As naval vessels were scarce, a flotilla of civilian tubs resembling the evacuation of Dunkirk carried ashore a force of troops and aviation engineers who immediately started construction of what was to become our largest base in the Aleutians. An airstrip was built first, to provide air cover for the ensuing construction. By 12 September, planes were taking off. On 14 September bombers from Adak struck three large cargo vessels in Kiska harbor, sank two minesweepers and



*Yank defenders also found environs hostile for operations, but contrary to Japanese expectations forged ahead, weather be damned. This airfield built on muskeg with Marston mat (above) lost 3,500 square feet (eight tons worth), rolled up by raging williewaw. (left) P-40 at Ladd Field stays warm enough to fly with engine heater. Attacks on Japanese installations began almost immediately — from the air. Lt. Col. Jack Chennault, (343rd Fighter Group, 11th Fighter Squadron "Aleutian Tigers"), shown below with P-40E, was son of Lt. Gen. Claire Chennault of "Flying Tiger" fame.*





strafed three midget submarines and a four-engine flying boat. On 20 September, a U.S. Army task force occupied the island of Atka, 60 miles east of Adak. There, too, docks, airfields and military facilities were hastily constructed, adding another link in the Aleutian chain of defenses.

The first week in October saw two lone Japanese planes twice overfly Adak and drop a few bombs to no effect — the last enemy action against Adak. By the following May 1943, Adak was a fortress and staging area for the attacks which were to come to the Japanese on Kiska, Attu, and ultimately, their homeland.

Meanwhile, scouting parties had confirmed that the island of Amchitka, only 60 miles from Kiska, was free of Japanese. It offered ideal terrain for an air base which could launch incessant bombing attacks upon the nearby Japanese occupying Kiska and Attu. Through incredibly foul January weather, a flotilla of three cruisers, four destroyers and four transports occupied the island with more than 2,000 American engineers and other troops. Work on the airstrip began immediately, and because of the weather the Japanese 60 miles away did not realize for several days that the Yanks were even there. For several weeks, every three days the Japanese bombed the new airfield, but never stopped its construction. Once adequate anti-aircraft guns were installed, the Japanese stayed away.

*One of first intelligence coups of war was this Zero, captured when punch-up with a PBY during raid on Dutch Harbor put a round through its oil line. Pilot tried to land wheels-down on Atukan Island, flipped over and was killed, but virtually intact Zero was shipped to San Diego for repair and study.*

### Seizing The Momentum

As soon as the first runway was completed, Jack Chennault's P-40s flew onto the island, and late in January 10 P-38s came aboard. With this fighter protection, construction continued around the clock under floodlights for fields that could handle bombers, and in March the 36th Bombardment Squadron moved its headquarters to Amchitka.

Living conditions for troops — and planes — was horrendous, but with a base this close to the enemy (literally close enough to see their camp fires on a night when the fog lifted) the battle to retake Kiska and Attu could begin.

As are most errant tenants in adverse possession, the Japanese on Kiska and Attu were nervous. Nearly 9,000 troops were eventually deployed by them on the two islands. Having established a camp at Holtz Bay on Attu, the Japanese immediately began to fortify the island, but in September the Japanese High Command decided to consolidate all their troops on Kiska in order to speed work on the airfield there. The U.S. Naval blockade of the Aleutians, however, was seen by Tokyo

as a prelude to an invasion of northern Japan, and this caused them to reconsider and reoccupy Attu by late October.

Wherever they happened to be, the Japanese were incessantly pounded by the 11th USAAF bombers from Umnak, Adak and Amchitka, and Navy PBYs continued to attack them from Atka. The bombing was designed to prevent completion of Japanese airfields that might be used as bases to attack the Canadian and American West Coast. Having to fight American bombers and Alaskan muskeg without adequate equipment to handle either and starving for supplies due to the effectiveness of the American naval blockade, the Japanese position was becoming untenable by early 1943. But Tokyo decided to keep troops on both islands as a deterrent to a possible northern-route invasion of the homeland by the United States. More convoys with supplies and troops tried to run the American blockade, but most were turned back or sunk. The last convoy to get through slipped into the harbor at Attu through the fog on 9 March, and from that point on the Japanese stationed there were on their own, with the Americans getting



ready to pounce.

Pioneering the island-hopping technique that later would work well in the South Pacific, it was decided to attack the seaward island of Attu first. This was a fortitous decision for the Americans, as the leeward island of Kiska contained more than 6,000 Japanese troops, and on Attu there were less than three thousand, commanded by Yasugo Yamasaki. Yamasaki had been inserted by submarine in April to orchestrate their last stand, which was truly an unenviable task considering he had at his disposal only 2,650 second-rate troops, 12 AA guns and some minimal coast artillery. As it would have been impossible to cover the entire island, Yamasaki ordered his troops into the mountains to fortify the high ground above Massacre and Holtz Valleys. He established his main camp in Chichagof Valley, and prepared to fight to the finish.

### Desert Troops In The Snow

The American attack was mounted with all undue haste. The Joint Chiefs wanted the island back ASAP, just in case Joe Stalin mustered the courage to use some of the more than \$9 billion in aid the Americans were sending him, to get in the fight against the Japanese. If that happened, then Kiska and Attu could be used as a springboard to invade Japan by a combined force. Stalin did

finally decide to attack (and keep) the Kurile Islands of northern Japan — towering chickendip opportunist that he was — shortly after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed and Japan was in the process of surrendering.

As American troops in Alaska were already spread too thin to scrape up an invasion force, the War Department chose to send in the 7th Motorized Division which was then training in the Mojave desert for use in North Africa. Although this sounds an unlikely choice, the Joint Chiefs were optimistic, as we had in our favor sea and air superiority, almost double the troop strength, and supply lines that were open.

General Albert Brown commanded the 7th, and a joint staff was sent from Alaska to coach these desert troops on the finer points of fighting in the arctic. D-Day was laid on for May 7th, and it was hoped we could bring the situation to a swift conclusion. There were to be inevitable problems caused not only by inadequate training and lack of cold-weather clothing and supplies, but by

the fact that we were wanting for intelligence and even adequate maps.

The invasion fleet included the battleships *Nevada*, *Pennsylvania*, and *Idaho*, the carrier *Nassau*, plus an accompaniment of cruisers, destroyers, troop ships and subs, for a total of 34 vessels. They sailed from Cold Bay on 4 May, but weather put off the invasion until 11 May 1943.

### Anticipating A Stubborn Foe

The Japanese were well-sited, well-prepared, and knew the invasion was coming. They had dug in around Holtz and Chichagof harbors, so the plan was to land troops above and below the Japanese: at the north side of Holtz Bay to push south, and at the south side of Massacre Bay to push north. Invading forces were to establish beachheads, take the Japanese in a lateral pincer, join forces and then drive against the enemy around Chichagof Harbor.

Using the ploy that was to be copied successfully in the Operation Overlord landings at Normandy, landings were made unopposed at Red Beach on Holtz

*(right) General Simon Bolivar Buckner (left, facing right), confers with staff during assault on Attu. Buckner was honcho of Alaskan Defense Command from 1940 to 1944, was later killed on Okinawa in 1945. (below) After establishing a successful beachhead, American forces on Attu had to pull men off the fighting line to move supplies forward when motor transport bogged down. (below, right) Even these Chaffee and Pershing tanks were no match for Attu's bottomless muskeg.*





*With more than a year to dig in, the Japanese left behind well-prepared coastal batteries, entrenched artillery such as this Type 41 75mm mountain gun, and extensive AA artillery and automatic guns. Only troops and small arms were evacuated.*

Bay as the Japanese considered the steep cliffs there to be an unpromising — and, therefore, unlikely — spot for us to land. Thus, all landings there and at Massacre Bay were in dense fog and unopposed. The plan looked good on paper, and the landings themselves went expeditiously. Things were looking up. But before it was over it would cost some 549 American lives plus 3,200 casualties from the Japanese and the foul weather.

Massacre Valley, named after a Russian massacre of native Aleuts in the days before Alaska became Seward's Icebox, ran north and south for two miles, with a prominent hogback in the middle. The cleverly dug-in Japanese delivered withering fire upon the invading G.I.s, and the battle ranged there for five days. A force of 200 Alaska Scouts landed on the north side of the island, carrying supplies for only two days because they expected to link-up with troops fighting in the Holtz Bay-Chichagof front. When they finally fought their way through five days later, only six men were left in fighting condition.

The impartial antagonist of climate was taking its toll. Hundreds of ill-equipped G.I.s suffered immersion foot. Wheeled — and even most tracked — transport was useless in the muskeg, and troops had to be pulled from the fighting front to be used as mules to carry materiel forward on their backs. After less than a week of battle, problems between the High Command and Gen. Brown caused Admiral Kinkaid to replace him with Gen. Eugene Landrum. Two days later, troops from Alaska's Fourth Infantry Regiment landed to assist the stalemated 7th Motorized Division, making a

total of 16,000 American troops on the island trying to mop up the approximately 1,500 remaining Japanese.

After two weeks of fighting, American troops had pushed the Japanese into a consolidated position in the Chichagof Valley. The Japanese were fighting for every inch of ground and only two prisoners had been taken so far. As weather conditions improved somewhat, American planes were able to engage Japanese positions. The Japanese made several attempts to bring in their own bombers, but American air superiority shot them down or drove them off. U.S. ships offshore added their own firepower to the battering of Japanese positions.

#### **A Lock And A Hard Place**

The situation of the Japanese under Admiral Yamasaki was rapidly becoming totally untenable. There was no hope for resupply by ship. Rescue was a total impossibility. The only hope lay in an attempt to overrun American positions and capture enough food and ordnance to continue the fight. This was a dismally desperate hope at best, but early in the morning of 29 May, Admiral Yamasaki and his 800 remaining troops breached American lines and stormed up Engineer Hill, inflicting heavy casualties as they went. At the crest of the hill General Archibald Arnold assembled every available hand — cooks, medics, engineers, anyone who could stand and shoot — and stopped the advance. Several more scattered attempts were made throughout the day, but the moon rose that night over 800 Japanese bodies: some 500 had committed *hara kiri*. Admiral Yamasaki was killed in the last assault of the day. We took only 28

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Japanese prisoners.

Attu was secure, although it took nearly three months to flush the last surviving Japanese from the holes in the mountains.

With Kiska outflanked, American attention turned immediately to reversing the flow of traffic in the Aleutian chain. On 10 July, American bombers took off from Attu to bomb the strategic Japanese bases on Paramushiro in the Kuriles. Japanese expansion had been contained, and all across the Pacific this new boot the Japanese wore was beginning to shrink.

Forced to acknowledge the loss of Attu, the Japanese High Command issued the following communique:

*The Japanese garrison on the island of Attu has been conducting a bloody battle with a small number of troops against a numerically far superior enemy under many difficulties, and on the night of 29 May carried out an heroic assault against the main body of enemy invaders with the determination to inflict a final blow on them and display the true spirit of the Imperial Army. Since then there has been no communication from the Japanese forces on the island and it is estimated that the entire Japanese force has preferred death before dishonor.*

Although this battle was over, the Aleutian campaign was not, nor was the war. Even as the battle raged on Attu, engineers unloaded equipment and supplies and began building an airfield to launch the next invasion — of Kiska. By 8 June, it was ready to handle Navy PBVs and Venturas, and bombers from the 11th USAAF.

### On To Kiska

In mid-1942 the Japanese had reinforced the garrison on Kiska with 1,200 additional men and six midget submarines. Eighteen float planes were based at Kiska, as were six Mavis bombers. Additional troops had been moved to Kiska from Attu in September 1942, and more were landed from Japan in early November, for a rough total of 6,000 Japanese on this American island. They desperately tried to construct airfields adequate to serve bombers, but Americans began putting pressure on Kiska almost as soon as the Japanese occupied it.

In mid-July, Admiral Theobald took five destroyers and attempted to shell Kiska, but four were damaged in the incredible fog, and the small task force turned back. On 3 August he tried again, sending the fleet out under command of Rear Admiral William "Poco"



*The Allies found little to do on Kiska but plant the flag and trade the plentiful supply of Japanese souvenirs, such as this Type 99 light machine gun (below).*



Smith. The weather was somewhat better and Smith could see the island, but targets were obscured by smoke from Japanese AA batteries, and the naval barrages caused little damage. With the action heating up far to the south at Guadalcanal, Admiral Nimitz pulled part of Theobald's fleet south, leaving the end of 1942 as a naval stalemate in the Aleutians.

But by the middle of 1943, with a successful blockade and the garrison on Attu annihilated, the Japanese on Kiska could see the handwriting on the wall. Americans controlled the sea and the air, ensuring that the Japanese on Kiska could neither attack, resupply, nor defend on a continuing basis. The only practical — although brazenly un-*Bushido* — thing to do would be to run before the Americans came.

Throughout May, June, July and early August the 11th USAAF bombed Kiska at will. Weather was favorable and with 16 hours of daylight the bombing continued around the clock. Nearly a million pounds of bombs were dropped in July — and over 300,000 pounds in one day. The 11th USAAF had nearly 350 combat planes, and used them relentlessly. The Navy had several battleships and many cruisers at their disposal, and when weather permitted, they shelled heavily.

This softening-up process went on until the middle of August. Our kill

ratio on Attu had been more than five-to-one in our favor, but we had them out-manned by three-to-one. We did not want to take chances on Kiska.

### Operation Cottage

Enemy strength on Kiska had even been estimated as high as 9,000, although the real number was two-thirds that. Code-named "Operation Cottage," the invasion of Kiska was scheduled for 15 August. Major General Charles Corlett commanded the invasion and had at his disposal the 15,000 men of the 7th Motorized Division that had taken Attu, 5,300 members of the Royal Canadian 13th Infantry Brigade, 5,000 troops of the 87th Mountain Combat Team, and 2,500 Canadian and American members of the First Special Service Force, for a total strength of 35,000 men. The units trained on Adak and Amchitka for a battle that was expected to bring high casualties, in spite of the preinvasion softening-up.

Kiska had looked like a good idea to Japan when it was occupied by 10 lonely sailors and their weather station, but with the Navy's ring of steel closing around the island, the USAAF's incessant bombing, and the thousands of G.I.s and Canadians who were getting set to take it back, it was decided the Japanese could urgently use these troops elsewhere.

The first indications that the Japanese had decided to break and run came on 10 July when a PBY spotted four small cargo vessels between Kiska and Japan. Our B-24s and B-25s sank one, left one sinking, and damaged the other two. Aerial-recon photos from 22 June showed evidence of demolition, the removal of some guns, and unusual activity among barges in the harbor on Kiska.

Several I-class subs did get in to evacuate some of the men, but many were sunk by American planes, and they were too small to evacuate the entire island. A bolder plan was presented to Admiral Kawase, commander of the Japanese forces in the North Pacific: A fleet of destroyers would steam into Kiska harbor under cover of fog, load the troops and high-tail it back to Japan. The plight of the Japanese on Kiska was growing more desperate with every day, and every day brought closer the inevitable Allied invasion.

### In The Nip Of Time

So on 21 July, an evacuation fleet of three cruisers and 11 destroyers left

Paramushiro in the northern Kuriles. Before noon on 28 July the rescue fleet was within 50 miles of Kiska Harbor. Two ships had been lost due to a collision in the fog, but the remaining nine destroyers swooped in and evacuated the remaining 5,300 men from the beach. The entire action was unobserved as all available American air power had been dispatched to engage a flight of phantom radar blips (radar was then less of an exact science). Thus, on 28 July, Radio Japan Kiska went off the air, and the Imperial Japanese forces went off the island under protective cover of the whimsical weather.

After 28 July there was no more AA fire from Kiska, and aerial photos showed no signs of activity. Vehicles were in the same spot from photo to photo. But training and preparation — and the monstrous bombardment — continued, on the assumption that if the Japanese had indeed bugged out, then the amphibious landing would be good drill for the Allied forces, and if the Japanese had retreated and dug into the mountains as on Attu, the better-trained Allied force, the better its chances for fewer casualties. In any case, Operation Cottage would put an end to Japanese occupation of U.S. soil ... the first such indignity since the War of 1812.

When the American and Canadian troops waded ashore on 15 August, they were greeted only by a few hungry dogs. Although four men died from Japanese booby traps, and 71 were killed when the destroyer *Abner Read* hit a mine and sank, the only other combat casualties were the 24 men who were killed in the darkness and fog by their own comrades, and another 50 similarly injured.

Within a few days the Island was swept to ensure there were no Japanese remaining, and most of the troops left shortly afterward, as they were needed elsewhere. A unit of Canadians was left behind for four months as an occupation force. The air facilities on Attu were completed as part of the "Northern Highway to Victory" and were used to launch bomber attacks on the Japanese homeland in the Kuriles.

North America was now free of the enemy. The Japanese North Pacific front was exactly where it had been on 7 December 1941. And the American juggernaut was just getting up a full head of steam.

*Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to Soldier of Fortune.* ✕

## Nothing Left To Lose

Continued from page 47

have been running and hiding their whole lives.

On the shores of a picturesque river near the headquarters of the KNLA's 5th Brigade, 70 Karen families have set up a temporary camp and are hiding from the Burmese army. They were forced out of their villages in November of 2000 after the Burmese army launched an operation to take over their villages from KNLA control. Three battalions of Burmese troops closed in on the area and began an orgy of destruction. Homes were torched and any of the villagers who couldn't flee in time were shot. In merciless fashion, the 365th,



*A Karen G catches dinner.*

367th, and 369th Infantry Battalions of the Burmese Army successfully drove out these Karen villagers from their homes. Now these 70 families scrounge the forest near their river camp in search of food, waiting to either return to their destroyed villages and rebuild their homes if the KNLA take back their area, or run again from the Burmese army — the more likely of the two options. "Born to run," says the aging intelligence officer describing his people, his words spoken with a tragic smile. "The Karen people are born to run — run for their life."

*This is Nelson Rand's first feature for Soldier Of Fortune. His previous I Was There article, "On The Offensive," appeared in our April 2001 issue.* ✕



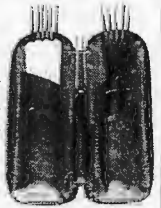
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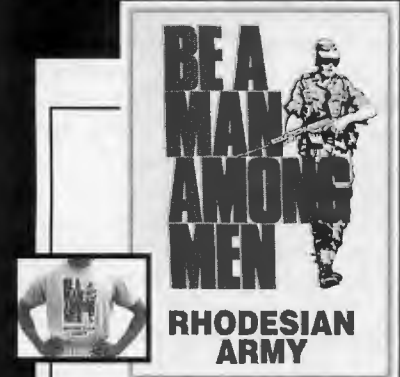
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which Col. Emerson tolerated, since we were good friends; I did refrain from wearing my WWII leggings, which he tolerated slightly less, although they were usually fairly effective at keeping out the leeches. (See *SOE*, April 2001.)

When Brig. Gen. Marshall scuttled off to take pictures of the guys making their preparations, Emerson ragged me a little, "For Christ's sake, Mike, I can't wait 'til those pictures hit the press. Why couldn't you carry an M16 and a normal .45 just this once? At least you're not wearing those goddamn 'fruit boots' again."

### **Mask-Up And Hit The Ground Running**

The lift helicopters were just setting down, so I left him shaking his head, as I ran to get aboard. I had not adjusted my mask yet, and was trying to do that, plus talk on the radio and orient myself on the way to the objective. About five minutes out, the copilot of each bird pantomimed for all on board to mask-up. Everyone else in my ship was already masked and two guys on each side were out on the skids ready to hit the ground running. While I was putting my mask on and taking it off during the adjustment process, I had noted that the double panes of glass in the eye lenses seriously distorted one's depth perception. I leaned out to watch a Chinook drop a huge cloud of CN on the target area, then took a final look at the objective before clearing my mask and sealing it. I also saw that we were still fairly high up, although through the mask we looked to be almost on the ground. Just then I saw a couple of guys in the birds ahead of us jump, obviously thinking that they were closer than they actually were. *Chrissakes!* They were still about 15 feet up. Before I could react, one of the guys out on the skid jumped. The other man out there was Dave Shuey — one of my best soldiers — and I could see that he was about to go, too. At that moment I was leaning out the door, hanging on to the pilot's seat with my right hand, holding the Schmeisser in my left, with my arm through the sling, and before I could get a good grip on my wits, as well as everything else, he jumped. I grabbed for the suspenders holding his LBE (load bearing equipment) and managed to catch the strap closest to me. Of course the goddamned thing came unhooked and I

was way off balance. He was simply too heavy, and the strap slipped through my hand, with the metal hook almost ripping off my left social finger in the process. Shuey went into a dry rice paddy, landing in a rolling tangle of arms and legs, and getting busted-up in the process, not life-threatening, but enough that I never saw him again. *Of all the dog shit luck.* One of my super studs was down, and all I ultimately managed to do was tear up the hand I needed to change magazines.

It turned out that a number of guys had been fooled by the masks, jumping from the skids prematurely. That caused a certain amount of confusion in the midst of all the other confusion, but, nevertheless, I saw the bulk of the assault force bailing out of the choppers, forming-up on the fly, and charging into the treeline. I was supposed to be right behind them to link up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon in the center of the camp to direct the mopping-up and search. In my absence, though, the CP gang had managed to put us in the wrong bird, so I took off full-tilt behind the assault party, leaving the RTO's *et al.* to catch up.

No way. It was impossible to be scared, run, and breathe through an M-17 Protective Mask without getting light-headed from the exertion. All I succeeded in doing was getting separated from my own command group, although it did not take me long to realize I was wasting my time trying to shout orders or offer any sage advice from inside the mask. As a result, the whole operation continued to run along on autopilot, which was probably just as well. When I arrived at the camp I heard the assault element firing like hell, systematically shooting into the hooches and bunkers, instead of leaving that to the 1st Platoon guys, who had been a little slow out of the blocks. The volume of fire, coupled with an annoying cluster of punji stakes to my front, made me unconsciously shy-off to the left, which was OK, since the flank security was nowhere in sight. It was very hard to see clearly, so when I thought I detected movement to my front, I knelt down behind a large palm tree, lifting my mask slightly in the hope that I could take it off to see what the hell I was doing.

Strictly a no-go. The CN was still doing its dirty deeds. While I was hunkered down readjusting my mask, a salvo of AK bullets sailed overhead cutting through the foliage. Not remembering to think that they might be hustling some of our prisoners away with them,

I reflexively triggered off a long burst with the MP40, sweeping it across the vegetation where I had seen the movement. More shadows. More shaking foliage. Whoever it was got the rest of the magazine, which was covered with blood from the ragged tear in my finger.

As I was swapping out clips, I got a long burst in return, with one of the bullets smacking into the tree about a foot above my head, knocking off a chunk of bark that hit the side of my mask. *Ouch, you sonofabitch!* I then hit the deck and popped off a series of controlled shots low to the ground. The lead man from our flank-security element had just come up, and I pulled him down beside me (with my bad hand) just as the guy I was sparring with fired again. Together, we laid down a base of bullets until a machine-gun came up and took over.

By the time I finally got into the center of the camp and linked-up with my CP, most of the mopping-up was already over. The powdered CN particles were designed to linger longer, so no one dared to take off those awful masks, especially since we continued to kick up clouds of the stuff as we moved around the smoldering compound. The residual powder made my finger burn like hell, as well as every sweat gland in my body. Even without the gas, the sight of the assault party would have been enough all by itself to scare the shit out any but the most hardcore VC. Triggered-out in our protective masks, we must have looked like space warriors right out of *Star Trek*.

All the discomfort aside, we had to agree that the gas worked as planned, and the surprise was complete. It had been a violent and overwhelming attack, not entirely indiscriminate, although still pretty untidy by our normal standards, due to the diminished degree of command and control. The downside of the CN prep was that it gave the VC about a five-minute head start on us, and the masks compounded the normal chaos of combat in an exponential fashion. Some of the VC got away across the stream, leaving a sniper back in the foliage on the other side to keep us from crossing to pursue them, which is probably the same thing I ran into out on the left flank. We continued to search what was left of the camp — from top to bottom and in-between — but found no prisoners. There were a bunch of C-ration cans, plastic spoons, and some American razor blades in one of the Gillette dispensers which came out of an SP Pack (special accessory pack), but that did

not prove anything.

### Bizarre Aftermath

The aftermath of the operation was rather bizarre, however. Notwithstanding the fact that we had made a clean sweep of the camp, losing only the men who had jumped early — and none of them seriously injured — we were all curiously dejected when it was all over, "SLAM" Marshall and Hank Emerson included. Because of the persistent effect of the CN, and the fact that it clung to our uniforms and equipment even after we had returned to the fire-base, there were no interviews and no accolades. Just as well.

That night an air of deep depression hovered around the Charlie Company portion of the perimeter. Normally we forgot things very quickly, but on this occasion we sat around analyzing what we could have done better, with everyone blaming himself that we did not find any prisoners. Maybe they had been there; maybe we were just not fast enough, courageous enough, tough enough.

Our reaction to the raid seemed to awaken in everyone the subliminal realization that we were indeed an elite brotherhood, members of an ancient cult, who were entirely dependent upon one another. Eventually, a couple of guys built a small fire; a couple more brought out their stashes of warm beer to pass around one at a time, while others shared cupped cigarettes. The rest of us found ourselves slowly and inexorably being drawn around the desultory blaze, as it struggled to keep all the real and imagined chimeras at bay in the sullen darkness. An odd moment suspended briefly in space and time. I drew in closer, to share the intense, yet somehow diaphanous, camaraderie of the veteran warriors — hard young men, often not yet 20, who had grown curiously old in the span of months. We had all bonded in a very subtle fashion, not enough to share intimate thoughts, but enough to share our profound cynicism, or whatever it was. We all might be expendable to Saigon and Washington, but not to each other. To recover our own we were prepared to hold-back nothing, "... nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life."

We gave it everything we had. At least we tried.

Colonel Mike Peck (Ret.), a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, was previously director of DIA's POW/MIA office in Washington, D.C. Presently, he is an international security consultant. ✕

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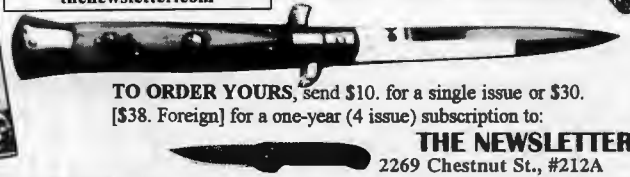
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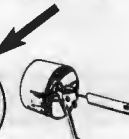
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Continued from page 34

an archaic Russian measurement equaling 28 inches.

Since the 7.62x54R cartridge offers performance squarely between the .308 Winchester and .30-06, the M1891 is a

comfortable rifle to shoot, although some shooters find the length and feel of the trigger pull take getting used to.

Since the M1891 action with split rear receiver bridge and Mannlicher flavor bolt does not lend itself to low telescopic sights directly over the bore, and since war-time M1891 rifles are rather crudely made when com-

pared to commercial rifles, this design is not often used as the basis for high grade "sporters." These factors have helped the M1891 remain in the "shooter" class and out of the "collector" class. This is good news, because this rifle was made to shoot, and to shoot a lot, and it is still very affordable. ❧

Military surplus fodder for the M1891 varies from superb to lousy. Most of the lousy ammo, however, is substandard more because it is old and not well cared for, than as a result of bad manufacture.

Most military surplus ammo features corrosive Berdan priming, requiring a scrubbing with hot soapy water to keep a good bore good, and accounting for many of the less-than-pristine bores in evidence on the market. I have found that some of the Chinese-made ammo with steel cases actually shoots pretty well, delivering groups of 1 1/2 to 2 inches at 100 yards in a good rifle. Some commercial ammunition also is available for the 7.62x54R. Most common is from Norma, which it is both good ammo and a source of good reloadable brass.

Lapua is also a major name in brass with the reloadable Boxer primers. With hundreds of thousands of M1891 rifles on the market, it is surprising that innovative ammo companies like PMC have not offered at least new brass in bulk. Until the situation degraded in the '90s in the former Yugoslavia, Hansen Cartridge Co. imported some superb ammunition for the 7.62x54R. This ammo featured non-corrosive Boxer priming and was offered with either full metal jacket or soft-nose bullets.

For the fortunate scrounger, there still exist odds and ends of the ammo that was made by Remington earlier in the 20th Century. Most of the 250,000 M1891 rifles made by Remington and Westinghouse never left the U.S., and those rifles were made available on the sur-

## AMMUNITION

plus market in the U.S. in the '20s for about \$3 each. Remington marketed ammo for them until about 1950.

The typical military loading for this cartridge is a .310, 147-grain bullet at 2,886 feet per second at the muzzle. Remington's loading sent a 150-grain bullet out at 2,820 fps. It is easy to duplicate the military loading, and it also is not difficult to create handloads with other bullet weights

that will shoot to point of aim with the military sights.

Although the military bullets are .310-inch in diameter, .308 bullets also work fine in most rifles. For those who want to shoot lighter bullets, there are many component bullets of .310 in the 123- to 125-grain range (designed primarily for the 7.62x39mm cartridge that is used in the SKS and AK rifles).

In some barrels, .311 bullets work okay, but it is necessary to slug the bore to determine whether it is a candidate. So, for general purposes, it cannot be suggested that bullets larger than .310 be used.

The author often makes his own .310 bullets, either from scratch with the Corbin bullet swaging system, or by swaging .308 bullets or drawing .311 bullets. This is an added level of expense and bother, but it is rather enjoyable.

Loading the 7.62x54R cartridge is both simple and easy. It takes only a basic reloading press and dies on the normally appointed bench. Several of the standard rifle powders work well, and the Boxer primed cases use standard large rifle primers. Normal operating pressures for this cartridge are about 45,000 copper units.

Two of the better known mail-order operations are Midway U.S.A., Dept. SOF, 5875 W. Van Horn Tavern Road, Columbia, MO 65203 and the Old Western Scrounger, Dept. SOF, 12924 Hwy. A-12, Montague, CA 96064.

Although it is possible to use cast lead bullets in the M1891, the author does not recommend it. The rifle was designed to use jacketed bullets, and it handles them best.

## LOADS

### 110-GRAIN BULLETS

48.0 grains of IMR 3031. Muzzle velocity 3,000 fps.  
51.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 3,000 fps.  
57.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,900 fps.

### 130-GRAIN BULLETS

50.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,900 fps.  
50.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,900 fps.  
56.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,800 fps.

### 150-GRAIN BULLETS

49.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,800 fps.  
49.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,800 fps.  
55.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

### 165/168-GRAIN BULLETS

45.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,600 fps.  
47.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,600 fps.  
52.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,600 fps.

### 180-GRAIN BULLETS

47.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,600 fps.  
47.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,600 fps.  
55.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

### 220-GRAIN BULLETS

43.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,300 fps.  
44.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,300 fps.  
51.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,300 fps.

measures.

• Three, the tracking device planted on the vehicle had been discovered as part of basic counter-measures used by the bombers. (A Radio Shack scanner modified to pick up the right frequency range would have easily detected the presence of an emitting tracking device, and the subsequent search of the vehicle would have discovered the item which the FBI has acknowledged as being "difficult to install covertly due to large size.")

Glenn Wilburn posited a theory in August 1996 that federal law enforcement had been following a decoy yellow truck the morning of the bombing while the Ryder truck with the bomb snuck undetected into Oklahoma City.

While that view must remain characterized as "theory" at this point, the succeeding five years have only added to the evidence that reinforces Glenn's view. Conversely, these same five years have produced not a shred of credible evidence that weakens his theory.

**Buck Rogers To The Rescue**

On 19 May 2000, the *Washington Post* carried a story in its Metro section titled, "Satellite System Has Star Role In Bank Robbery Investigation." The sub-lead read, "Grand Jury in Alexandria Indicts Suspect Tracked by FBI."

The story described how the FBI used its most technologically advanced vehicle-tracking device to trace the alleged perpetrator's movements. The Global Positioning System (GPS) allowed the FBI to track the suspects' movements and overlaid the location of his van onto a computer-generated map.

Quoting "a member of the [District of Columbia] police's electronic surveillance unit," the article stated:

"We had an older system that was a beeper, but we had to wait for the car to stop somewhere and then go find it. Now if the car is in North Dakota, we can sit here in our office and track it."

Five years after the Oklahoma City bombing, the FBI had resolved the most pressing hardware deficiency in its fight against domestic terrorism.

*A former Marine officer and co-producer of 20/20, Roger Charles has been a frequent contributor to SOF on the OKC bombing.* ✕

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## Get Your Gear

Continued from page 16

There are a number of other factors involved in the production of binoculars which increase the price and quality such as the quality of the lenses used and the size of the binocular's optical system. A high-end set uses fully-coated lenses (typically magnesium fluoride) to prevent light reflection and glare and to allow as much light as possible to pass through the optic to the eyes. High-end "glasses" typically feature lenses that have not one, but two or more layers of anti-reflective material for maximum light transmission. Other factors that influence quality, are the sizes of the lenses, particularly objective lenses, as bigger is better as it allows in more light.

Before we get into the practical end of things like using and shopping for the binocular that is right for you, let's cover exit pupil size, which affects how well light is transmitted to your eyes in low-light conditions. Exit pupil size are those two small rings of light you see when you hold the binocular away from your face and is determined by dividing a binocular's objective lens size by its magnification. Let's say you have a 10x42 binocular as an easy example (10 being the magnification factor and 42mm is the lens size in millimeters), you then have an exit pupil size of 4.2mm (42 divided by 10). As light decreases (dusk or dawn) the eyes dilate to about 5mm, meaning that the best "glasses" for low-light viewing will have at least an exit pupil size of 5mm or more, with 4mm about normal. Other physical properties include weight (those 30-ounce glasses around your neck can feel like 30 pounds after a full day of hunting), and field of view (how wide an area, in feet, your eyes see through the lenses at a given distance).

Let me relate a story to you as told to me by a bow-hunting friend. He was hunting caribou along with a guide and another hunter in Canada. They were on day four of a six-day hunt with no results. They had been glassing for hours without a contact when my friend suddenly spotted a single animal bedded down about a mile away across a huge basin — the viewing conditions were terrible; light rain and low clouds. He finally stalked and harvested the caribou. The point here is that he had a quality binocular (about \$900) while his hunting companions used relatively inexpensive

compact binoculars and never even saw the caribou — only tundra.

The care and feeding of a set of binoculars is pretty simple. Keep them stored in a case or even a cloth bag. After field use you can simply use a damp cloth to wipe them off if need be. I keep an old toothbrush around to get the bigger crud off. The lenses are an entirely different ball game. It's a good idea to use a lens cleaning solution recommended by the manufacturer. Blow on the lenses to get any dust or grit off, put a few drops of cleaner on, spread using a soft cloth to clean the lenses. Some of the cleaning solutions also prevent external fogging for up to a day. Another method of cleaning is to use a clean micro-fiber lens tissue.

Selecting a binocular that's best for you depends upon what you want to use it for and what you can afford. And, yes, pricing does affect the quality to a great degree. If you're going hunting, and are serious about it, you need a premium set — so get the best you can afford. My best advice is to tell the salesperson on the other end of the line or across the counter from you, exactly what you intend to use the glasses for: heavy cover hunting, open range hunting, general purpose, and let them give you a specific recommendation in your price range. In heavy cover you do not want a 12-power nor do you want a 7- power if you are in open country scouting a mile away.

One particular low-cost but all around good binocular that I've personally used is from the Sovietski Collection, Dept. SOF, 3473 Kurtz St., San Diego, CA, 92110; to order, phone (800) 442-0002; for customer service, phone (888) 442-7227; website [www.sovietski.com](http://www.sovietski.com). These 7x30 and 10x42 binocs are identical to those issued to Soviet naval officers and feature multi-coated optics throughout, independent eye-piece adjustability, classic porro-prism design, moisture/ shock/dust resistant and are hermetically sealed. I've have a 7x30 set that I've used for general purpose use when fishing at Lake Havasu, Ariz. Stored in the boat these glasses have been exposed to temperatures as low as 28 degrees F, and as high as 120 F during the summer. I've used them for over five years and I'm very satisfied with their performance, especially for the price. Currently the 7x30 units are \$119 plus shipping and handling; and the 10x42 are priced at \$149 plus s&h. They also come with rubber lens covers, carrying strap and amber filters and two-year warranty. ☒

## Atoms For Allah

Continued from page 43

of advanced systems which include submarines and at least two types of sophisticated torpedoes, which could eventually create additional risk factors in Gulf waters.

That was followed by former President Clinton having twice raised with President Putin the prospective sale to Iran of advanced laser technology that Washington says could be used to make fissile fuel for atom bombs. *New York Times* correspondent, Judith Miller, told this correspondent that while the Russian president assured Mr. Clinton that his country would work with Washington to resolve the dispute, the response was regarded as "ambiguous." She said that issues centered on Russian and American technical advisors disagreeing with each other as to whether the equipment was likely to be used in Iran's WMD programs. Significantly, Russian sales of nuclear technology to Iran have been of long-standing concern in the United States, Miller said.

American allegations that Russia provides crucial technology to Iran have roiled relations between the two countries for a long time. Langley has always believed that Iran had a secret program to develop nuclear weapons, as well as biological and chemical weapons, though both Moscow and Tehran reject this idea.

At the same time, Russian nuclear contracts with Tehran have expanded since 1995 when cash-strapped Moscow signed a multi-billion dollar contract to complete the 1,000 MW light-water reactor contract at Bushehr. Additional plans for up to four reactor and turbine units are in the pipeline. It is noteworthy that the project is similar to that being constructed in North Korea under the terms of the "Agreed Framework." While American officials do not regard Bushehr, *per se*, as a source of nuclear material that could be diverted to a bomb-making program (it falls under IAEA safeguards) the Americans fear that the project will train an entire generation of Iranian physicists and engineers in all the nuclear technologies required to produce nuclear weapons.

Then, last spring news arrived that Russia's Science and Technology Center of Microtechnology, a unit of the Efremov Institute, had signed a contract to provide the laser nuclear fuel

know-how and equipment to Iran. While this technology was originally developed in the U.S., it was abandoned a year ago because it was regarded as too expensive to commercialize. With that experience, said Ms. Miller, "Washington reacted with alarm to intelligence reports from multiple sources indicating that Iran was trying to buy such technology from Russia."

CIA special assistant on non-proliferation, John Lauder, disclosed at the same time that not only were Russian nuclear-linked security controls "weak," but Moscow's assistance extended well beyond the reactor. Cooperation included projects "ostensibly for civilian use but with a direct application to the production of weapons-grade fissile material."

### Delivery Capability Grows

Iran's missile program has also come under sustained scrutiny in Washington. CIA testimony last September disclosed that Iran had already deployed hundreds of short-range (150-500 km) ballistic missiles covering most of Iraq and many strategic targets in the Persian Gulf.

Soon, the report added, "it will deploy the 1,300km Shahab-3 medium range ballistic missile (*See sidebar*) which will allow Tehran to strike directly at Israel as well as most of Saudi Arabia and parts of Turkey. ... Iran probably has a small number of Shahab-3s available for use in a conflict: it has announced that production and deployment had begun and it has publicly displayed three Shahab-3s along with a mobile launcher and other ground support equipment," said Langley.

The CIA suggested that Iran's public statements indicated that it planned to develop more advanced longer-range delivery systems because:

- Iran's defense minister announced the development of the Shahab-4, originally calling it "a more capable ballistic missile than the Shahab-3," but in a later *volte face*, categorizing it as an SLV (space launch vehicle) with no military applications

- Tehran has mentioned a Shahab-5, strongly suggesting that Iran intends to develop even longer-range ballistic missiles in the near future.

- Iran has displayed a mock-up satellite and SLV, suggesting that it had plans to develop a vehicle to place in orbit Iranian satellites. However, Tehran could convert an SLV into a missile by developing a re-entry vehicle.

The CIA disclosed in the September report that "entities in Russia, North Korea and China supply the largest amount of ballistic missile-related goods, technology and expertise to Iran." China, it said, "provided CSS-8 SRBMs, while North Korean equipment and technical assistance helped Iran establish the capability to produce Scud SRBMs and Russian help accelerated Iranian missile development."

The CIA report suggested that during the next five years, the Tehran government was more likely to develop intermediate-range ballistic missiles based on Russian technology before developing an ICBM, but that the same technology would be used.

"Iran could test such an IRBM before the end of that period," the report read. In the period 2006-2010 says the document, Western strategists believe that Iran will *in all likelihood* test an IRBM.

"All assess that Iran could flight-test an ICBM that could deliver nuclear-weapon-sized payloads to many parts of the United States in the latter half of the next decade. Again, this would be using Russian technology acquired over the years," said the report, adding that Iran was likely to test an ICBM — possibly as an SLV without an RV impact downrange — before 2010.

In testimony on chemical weapons (CW) before the Senate, Robert Einhorn also disclosed that Iran had one of the developing world's largest such programs. Tehran began offensive efforts during the Iran/Iraq war in response to Iraq's CW use. By 1987, Iran was able to deliver limited quantities of blister (mustard) and blood (cyanide) agents against Iraqi troops using artillery shells. Since then, there was evidence that Iran's CW production included nerve, blister, choking and blood agents.

### Treaties And Pie Crust

"Despite its 1997 ratification of the CWC, we believe Iran's CW program continues and that it possesses a substantial stockpile of weaponized and bulk agents," the assistant secretary of state declared. There was also a fear, he suggested, that "this trend towards self-sufficiency is worrisome since it means that Iran could eventually become a supplier of CW-related materials to other nations," said Einhorn.

There is substantial evidence that Iran has also acquired an offensive biological warfare (BW) program, at least since the Iran-Iraq War, notwithstand-

ing the fact that Tehran has been a party to the Biological Weapons Convention since August 1973, said Einhorn. "While we assess that the Iranian BW program is still largely in the R&D stage, we believe that Iran holds some stocks of biological agents and toxins." He added that Iran was actively seeking to acquire materials, equipment and expertise from foreign suppliers — primarily from entities in Russia and Western Europe.

An interesting aside here is a study made by the U.S. Army which is relevant: At this stage, any Iranian threat would be linked to a Scud-type missile, though that scenario is changing. The report suggests that a Scud attack with an anthrax BW head would see a 90% effectiveness downwind if the attack were not effectively detected. With prior detection, it could be as little as 20%.

It noted, too, that filled with the pathogen botulinum, a Scud could contaminate an area of almost 4,000 sq. kms. (though weather and atmospheric conditions would need to be ideal). Significantly, that is 16 times greater than the same warhead filled with Sarin nerve gas.

There are several reasons to believe that Tehran might also have given attention to radiological weapons, the first being that Iraq did work in this direction. Its *Shi'ite* neighbor is known to have a propensity for emulation, if only to establish what kind of threat might be in the offing if relations between the two countries deteriorate once more. Unquestionably, the specter of a million dead in the last seven Iran/Iraq war continues to haunt the present generation of Iranians.

Radiological weapons, basically, are nuclear-weapon variants designed to kill through radiation only (as opposed to shock or blast effect). While such weapons don't exist, UNSCOM inspectors in Iraq uncovered evidence that Saddam Hussein had a research project in place prior to the Gulf War.

Relevant here is the fact that radiological weapons could, in principle, be delivered by any of the Shahab missiles that Iran is working on. Certainly, it would be ideal for use against the Jewish State's heavily populated larger centers like Tel Aviv or Haifa. And since radiological weapons pose long-term contamination hazards, the more distant Israel might be deemed a more suitable target than one of Iran's neighbors.

Al J. Venter is *SOF's* Contributing Editor for Africa. ✕

federal building. 19 April 1995 is also the 10-year anniversary of the FBI siege at a northern Arkansas terrorist training camp, called the CSA, where Snell and fellow CSA members planned the first bombing of the Murrah Building, and other serious crimes. Regarding this obvious motive for the crime in OKC, the authors dismiss the Snell connection, calling it a "red herring." McVeigh, the book says, never met Snell.

When the authors try to explain the 5 April 1995 phone call to Elohim City, from McVeigh's motel room in Kingman — some 25 seconds after he calls a Ryder truck rental — we are informed McVeigh was calling to inquire about using Elohim City as a hideout after the bombing. However, a few pages later, we are told Mr. McVeigh took the license plate off his car before leaving Oklahoma City because, he figured, he would be caught anyway. But when the bomb goes off, McVeigh heads north, toward Kansas, not east toward Elohim City.

And then there's Timmy's bomb story. But first, a little more background. The record at the McVeigh and Nichols' trials makes clear that before April 1995, no evidence was introduced either man built any kind of successful explosive device. Unfazed by this detail, the authors of *American Terrorist* regurgitate a story from McVeigh that is somewhat similar to what he fed his defense team. When asked how he became the world's greatest bomb-builder, we are told, "I went to the library and checked out a book on improvised explosives."

McVeigh told the authors that he used 13 plastic 55-gallon barrels filled with a mixture of fertilizer and racing fuel. He says he placed these 13 barrels in a T-shape in the cargo hold of the truck. After connecting nonelectric blasting caps, via two lines of shock tube, he connects the whole thing to several packages of Tovex that he has placed in a bucket near the barrels of amfo.

Next, McVeigh hauls the whole mess, 250 miles, over bumpy highways and delivers it the front of the Murrah Building, without incident.

And just when you think it can't get any more ludicrous, we are told

our "action hero" drives through downtown OKC traffic, with the fuses lit to his bomb.

*"Keeping his eyes peeled for onlookers, McVeigh pulled the truck briefly over to the side of the road, just long enough to pull out a disposable lighter and ignite the 5-minute fuse to his bomb. The sizzling fuse began to fill the truck cab with smoke and the acrid smell of burning gunpowder. As he continued down N.W. 5th Street, McVeigh had to roll down both windows to let some of the smoke out. Just past the Regency Towers apartment complex, a block from the intended target building, McVeigh had to stop for a traffic light. Now he lit the shorter bomb fuse — the one he had measured at approximately two minutes. For the longest 30 seconds of his life, McVeigh sat watching the red light, with both fuses burning."*

And so it goes. Presumably, with seconds ticking toward detonation and smoke pouring out both windows of the truck, McVeigh will happen upon the only empty parking spot large enough to handle the truck. This crucial vacancy just happens to be the indented parking area for delivery trucks, located exactly dead-center to the front doors of the federal building. Only steps from being underneath the building's glass and concrete facade — this is the most vulnerable location to detonate a truck bomb.

Capitalizing on this extremely good fortune, McVeigh pulls up, calmly jumps down and takes a path that he later draws for his authors — a sidewalk in front of the YMCA. McVeigh claims he walked for at least 200 feet along this sidewalk, before disappearing up an alleyway to find his reliable getaway car he has only just purchased for a couple hundred bucks and stashed days earlier. McVeigh admits having trouble getting the "junkie" to start, but once again, his luck holds a bit longer and he makes his short-lived getaway.

At this point, if common sense hasn't overwhelmed the reader, maybe a little evidence will. After the bombing, a videotape was turned over to the FBI. Later, McVeigh's defense team received a copy. It turns out a camera mounted on the south side of the *Journal Record* Building was pointed directly at the sidewalk that McVeigh says he used to make his solo escape. I am familiar with this film because I reviewed a short piece of the tape to determine if it showed the

front of the Murrah Building and the truck pulling up in front. It did not. The camera angle precluded it. But with the publication of *American Terrorist* this film footage has taken on new importance.

Stephen Jones and one of his investigators, who spent hours looking for any evidence that might be reflected on the film, confirmed for this article that there was, you guessed it, no McVeigh!

"Think about it, J. D.," Jones surmised, "if Tim had been walking down that sidewalk the government would have introduced that film at trial and the whole world would have seen it."

Also for the record, witnesses at the scene said McVeigh and another man sped away from the area in the same yellow Mercury the Desert Storm veteran was arrested in 70 minutes after the blast. A second vehicle, a dark pickup truck, with three men inside, also left the scene at a high rate of speed — only seconds after a man exited the Ryder truck's passenger door. In all, some two dozen witnesses reported seeing Mr. McVeigh in downtown Oklahoma City that fateful morning — and each reported that he was with others. After a six-year investigation, the overwhelming evidence I've reviewed suggests that at least four men were with McVeigh that morning.

McVeigh's answer:

"The truth is, I blew up the Murrah Building. Isn't it kind of scary that one man could reap this kind of hell?"

Even scarier is what two creative writers and a lunatic can do with a good marketing department behind them. *American Terrorist* — the end-product of the partnership that created this self-serving aggrandizement of a delusional meth-addict and psychotic killer — has proven to be an outrage to the survivors and relatives of the victims of the crime. As well, I believe the authors' failure to corroborate McVeigh's exploits is an affront to the intelligence of the American people. But most irresponsible, is that giving someone like McVeigh an unfiltered medium to sell this twisted tale guarantees others will follow in his bloody footsteps. We are not well-served by the publication of these outlandish accounts.

What we want is the truth!

*J. D. Cash, a well-known investigative reporter from Oklahoma, has researched the Oklahoma City bombing since Day One — 19 April 1995. ✕*



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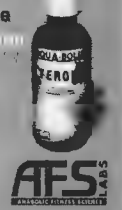
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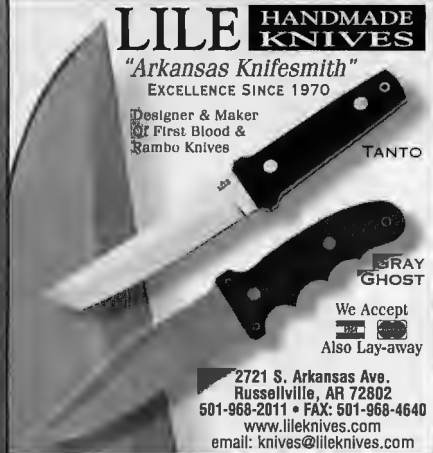
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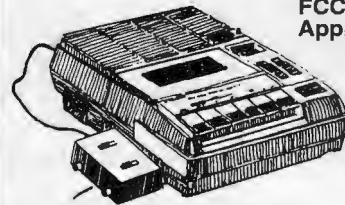
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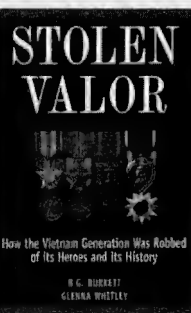
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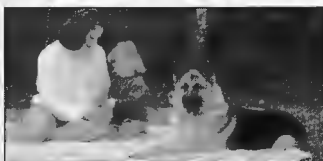
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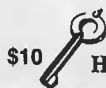


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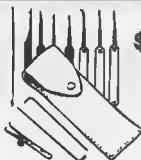


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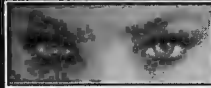
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by Col. David H. Hackworth (Ret.)

## Out-Terror The Terrorist

A court in the Netherlands recently found a Libyan intelligence officer guilty of murder in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.

At long last, justice prevailed. Or has it?

Major Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, the terrorist, got 20 years at most for killing 270 human beings. Less than a month in a modern Dutch prison for every person assassinated. A shoplifter in New York City might pull more and harder time.

And what about Libyan leader Colonel Moammar Gadhafi carrying on like Adolf Hitler on a bad-mustache day about the crooked deal the court laid on his hired gun?

Like dictators everywhere, Gadhafi is a control freak. Nothing in his police state gets a green light without his personal OK. So you can bet the family car that he gave the order. No way did Megrahi wake up one morning and decide to blow up a U.S. passenger jet all by his lonesome. Lockerbie was all about an eye for an eye; payback for Ronald Reagan thumping Gadhafi in 1986 after Libyan fingerprints were found all over the grenade fragments that killed two American soldiers in a Berlin disco.

But while George W. Bush promises that U.S. business bans will stay in place, Gadhafi's cash registers continue ringing from oil sales. Like Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the crazy colonel knows how to beat the sanctions. Dubya needs to put a stop to more than a decade of presidential soft talk and act. It's time we went after the real perp behind the Pan Am bombing and delivered the message to all foreign terrorists: Don't mess with the U.S.A.

International terrorism coupled with Weapons of Mass Destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear — are America's major threat. One WMD released in New York City, Dallas or Los Angeles could cause more deaths than all our past wars combined. Face it: We're vulnerable.

Remember the World Trade Center, which almost became a sarin-enhanced WMD main event, and the near-disasters planned for New Year's 2000 in Seattle and New York City, prevented only by deft FBI roll-ups? Or take a look at the recent terrorist hits on our embassies in Africa, our bases in Saudi Arabia and the U.S.S. Cole in Aden, Yemen.

States like Libya operate by hiring rats to do their dirty work, hoping they won't leave evidence leading back to the home office. After a mass killing, these leaders gleefully critique the



*Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.*

horror on the tube, then say, "It wasn't me" with a straight face and blame the evil deed on supposedly stateless fanatics like Usama bin Laden.

To stop the crazies from importing WMD, or any other type of terrorism to our shores, we need to return to the rules that kept the United States and the Soviets from nuking themselves to radiated smithereens: Mutually Assured Destruction.

Our attackers must know that what they bring to us will be returned to them by a factor of 10. And we need to start by making an example of Gadhafi — beginning right now.

Our planners should draw up a list of targets in Libya: every port, airfield, depot, gun factory, headquarters, training area, tank park and military barrack. This list would then be provided to Gadhafi's top brass along with the message that until their glorious leader turns himself over to an international court for trial, Libya will be pulverized. Then the day before our B-2 bombers launch their first night stealth attack, all sites would get leaflet drops telling the citizens to get out of the beating zones.

Every week or so, the USAF would turn a chosen target into rubble. There would be no collateral damage, and our bomber crews would get in some practice. Instead of dropping bombs on desert training ranges — which upset the horny-toad lovers — we'd smash Libya's defense machine one cog at a time at little or no risk.

Believe it — the Libyan generals would soon deliver-up their Head Looney Toon. And other rogue nations such as Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan — that are plotting, sponsoring and aiding international criminals planning to zap the U.S.A. as I write — would quickly get the word.

Right now, the only way to fight the fires of this new face of war — international terrorism — might be with the business end of a B-2.

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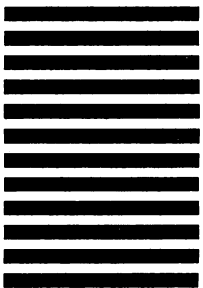
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